

GamerZines

ISSUE 03 | APR 2013

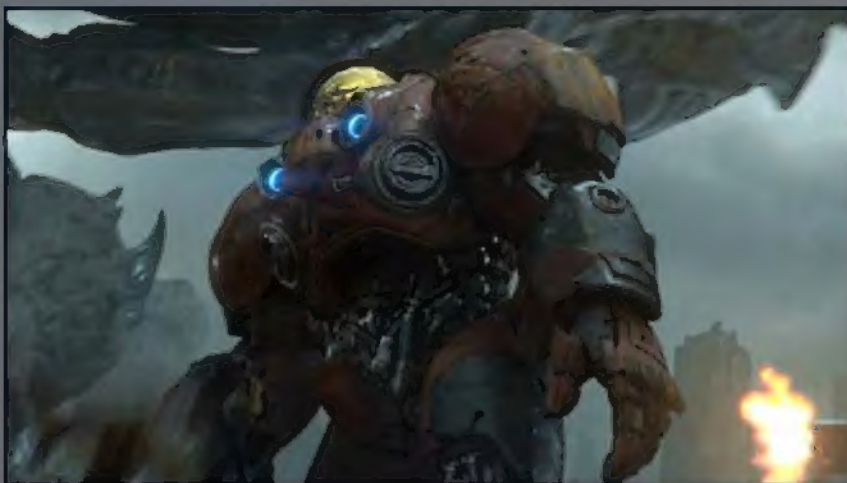
# FirstLook

*Powered by PreOrder-IQ.com*



**THE NEXT CHAPTER REVEALED**

# ASSASSIN'S CREED® IV BLACK FLAG



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO](#)







# WELCOME TO FirstLook



This is the largest issue of *FirstLook* we've created so far. Sure, we're only three issues in, but that doesn't mean we aren't making progress in giving you the kind of game content you yearn for!

In this packed April issue, we have a slew of significant releases, including the assuredly

bloody yet gorgeous *Total War: Rome 2* and the surprising emergence of a new numbered sequel in the *Assassin's Creed* series. The previous game wasn't exactly a hive of creativity, but Ubisoft Toronto are looking to change all that with a new piratey setting, more naval combat and a protagonist that seems to have a lot in common with Keith Richards! We'll let Lauren Wainwright tell you more.

Other favourites this month include a lengthy hands-on with Realmforge Studio's stealth throwback *Dark*, a detailed rundown on why we think *ShootMania: Storm* will radically transform the twitch-centric FPS scene and our very first competition – score!

Enjoy the issue,

**Andy Griffiths, Editor**  
[FIRSTLOOK@gamerzines.com](mailto:FIRSTLOOK@gamerzines.com)

## MEET THE TEAM

Still picking over  
some delectable  
pre-orders...



**Lauren Wainwright**  
Hopes Desmond stays retired...

**Don't miss!**  
*This month's  
top highlights!*



**TOTAL WAR:  
ROME 2**



**CITIES IN  
MOTION 2**



**COMMAND &  
CONQUER**



**DARK**





## ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG



## WHY SHOOTMANIA WILL CREATE A STORM

## QUICK FINDER



Command  
& Conquer  
*Assassin's Creed  
IV: Black Flag*  
Dark  
*Cities in Motion 2*  
Leviathan:  
Warships  
*ShootMania  
Storm*  
Dollar Dash  
Competition

*Payday 2*  
*Pre-Order*  
*Must Haves*  
*Total War:*  
*Rome 2*  
*Brothers: A Tale*  
*of Two Sons*  
*Demonicon*  
*DLC and UGC*  
*Round-up*

### Cranberry Publishing Limited

[www.cranberrypublishing.com](http://www.cranberrypublishing.com)

Publishing Director: Dave Taylor

Email: [dave.taylor@cranberrypublishing.com](mailto:dave.taylor@cranberrypublishing.com)

Commercial Director: Duncan Ferguson

Email: [duncan.ferguson@cranberrypublishing.com](mailto:duncan.ferguson@cranberrypublishing.com)

Telephone: 0117 986 6550

Call Duncan to discover how e-publications can work  
for you!

## DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE!

Did you know that a new issue of *FirstLook* is  
released every month, and by subscribing  
you'll be one of the first to read it?





# YOUR CITY. YOUR WAY.



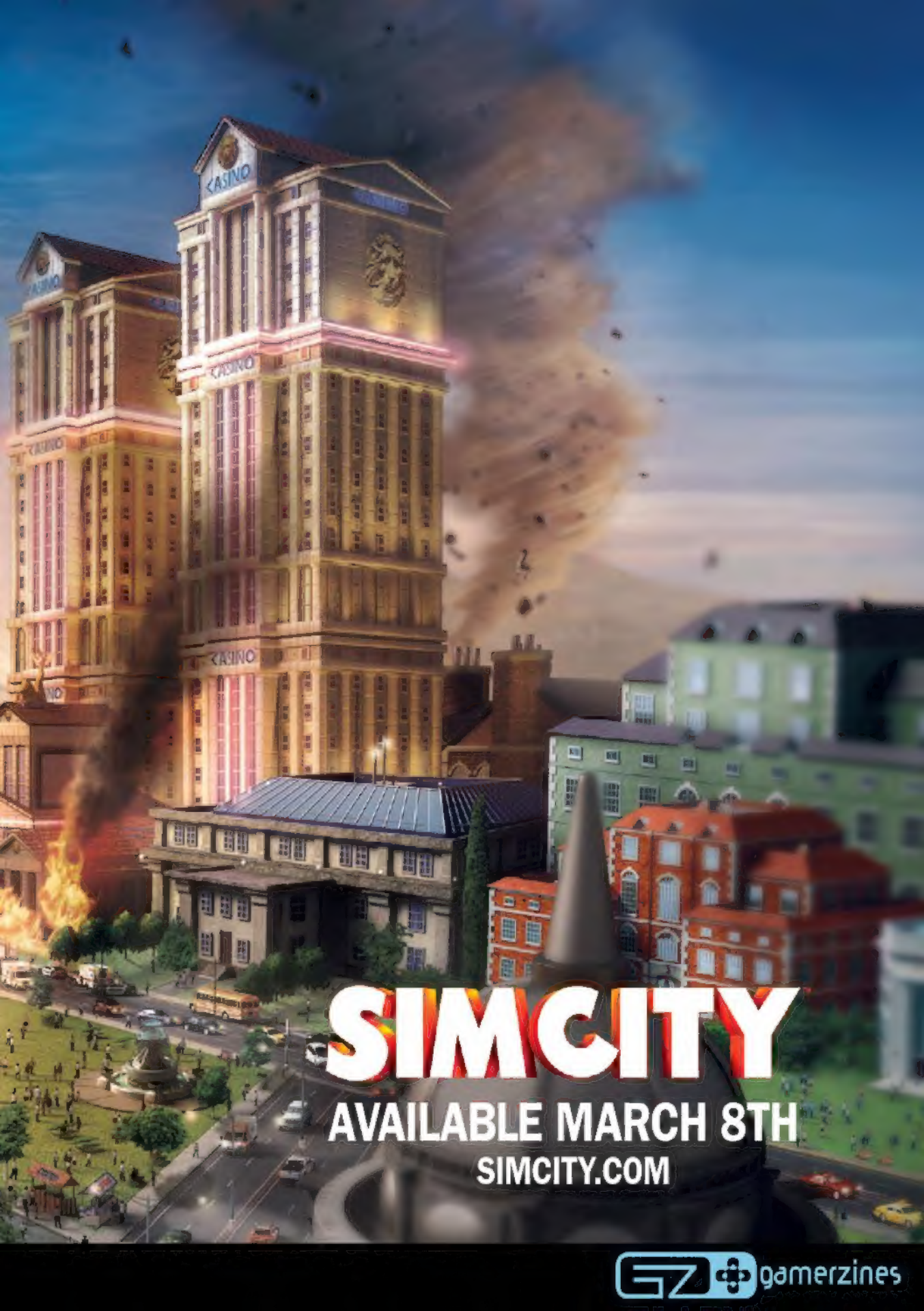
***CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO***



© 2013 Electronic Arts Inc. EA, the EA logo, Maxis, the Maxis logo, and SimCity are trademarks of Electronic Arts Inc.. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

**FirstLook** |





# SIMCITY

AVAILABLE MARCH 8TH

[SIMCITY.COM](http://SIMCITY.COM)



PREVIEW

# COMMAND & CONQUER

PUB: ELECTRONIC ARTS  
DEV: VICTORY GAMES  
PLATFORMS: PC  
ETA: 2013

## THE RTS DADDY RETURNS

**T**he name *Command & Conquer* has been around for 17 years. That's almost two decades' worth of spin-offs, reboots, expansions, browser games and Facebook tie-ins. Westwood's series has been everywhere and done seemingly everything, yet that doesn't mean Victory Games' take on the series isn't at least refreshing.

Powered by DICE's Frostbite 2 engine and focusing on the *Generals* universe, 2013's *C&C* is a free-to-play online-only RTS with players choosing from three different factions – the well-financed European Union, the infantry-focused

Asian-Pacific Alliance and the Middle-Eastern Global Liberation Army.

This new *C&C* is promoted as a multiplayer-focused experience, based around competitive PvP, including free-for-all matches, AI skirmishing and more imaginative modes like Capture The Flag. Excitingly, Victory Games aren't ruling out the Tiberium or *Red Alert* universes being added to the game post-launch, and the inclusion of new single-player campaigns are also being teased. This *C&C* seems new yet encouragingly familiar, but you know what? That's exactly how we want it. ■



**FirstLook** | Preview





**PreOrderIQ**

*Click here for up-to-date  
prices and offers now!*





**18**  
www.pegi.info

[WWW.DEFIANCE.COM/GAME](http://WWW.DEFIANCE.COM/GAME)

©2013 Titan Worlds, Inc. Titan, Titan Worlds, Defiance, and their respective logos, are trademarks or registered trademarks of Titan Worlds, Inc. Portals ©2013 Universal Television Networks. "PS", "PlayStation", "PS3", "P3" and "PS" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Kinect, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft. Software platform logo (TM and ©) EASA 2006. All other trademarks and logos belong to their respective owners. All rights reserved.

**FirstLook** |



# DEFIANCE

JOIN THE FIGHT



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO](#)

COMING APRIL 2013

**PRE-ORDER NOW**



PS3



XBOX 360

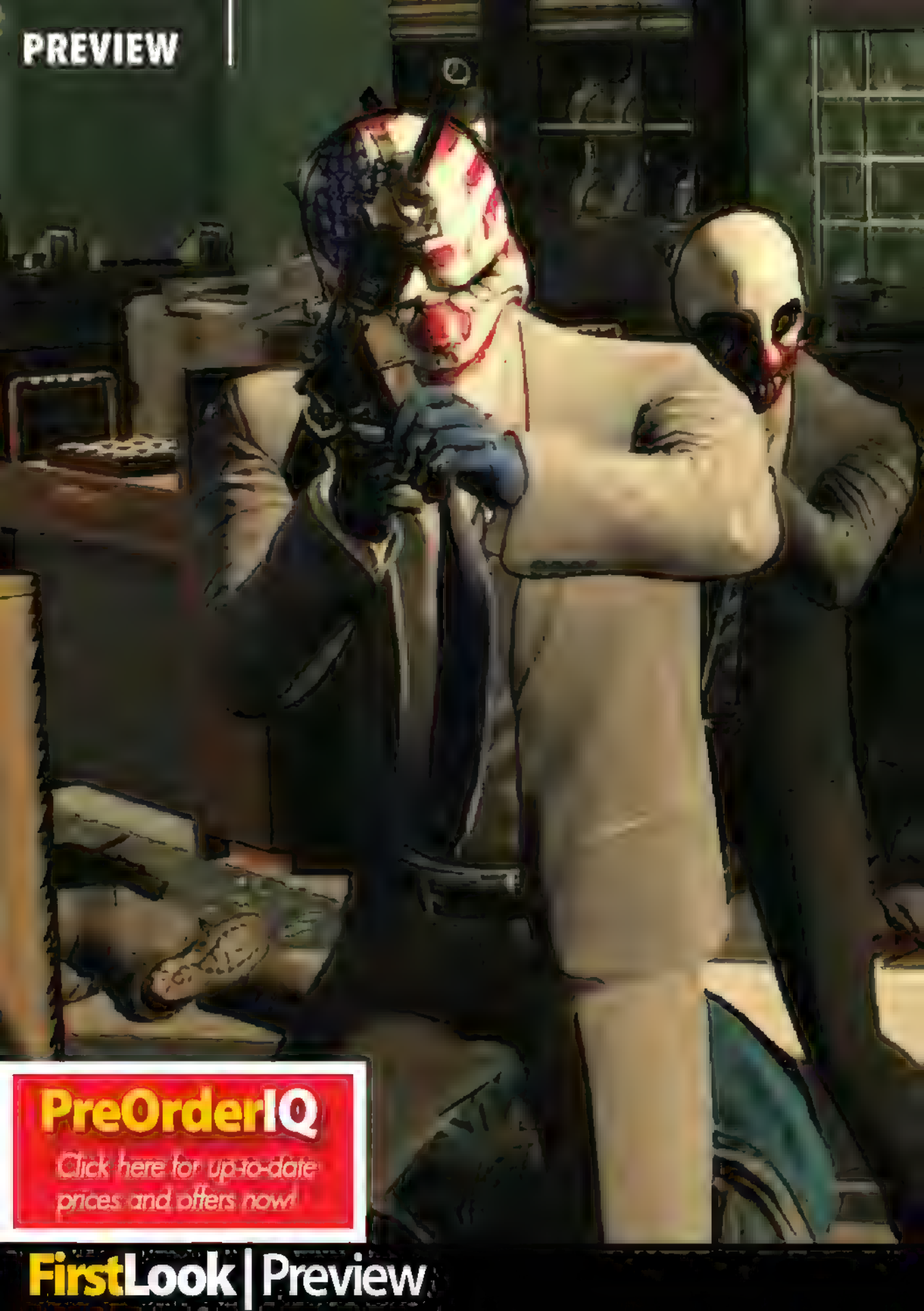


WII

TRION



**PREVIEW**



**PreOrderIQ**

*Click here for up-to-date  
prices and offers now!*

**FirstLook | Preview**



# PAYDAY 2

PUB: 505 GAMES  
DEV: OVERKILL SOFTWARE  
PLATFORMS: PC, XBOX 360, PLAYSTATION 3  
ETA: SUMMER

## TIME TO MASK UP...

**P**ayday: The Heist got so much right when it came to emulating the giddy thrill of gritty modern heist movies – that tense moment when you first arrive at the scene, the bad-ass donning of the mask to intimidate ‘civvies’ and that tipping point when all hell breaks loose as you struggle to fight back against the cops as you flee the scene with expensive goods in duffel bags. *Payday* got a lot right, and this is something Overkill modestly recognise so rather than reinventing the wheel with *Payday 2*, they’re expanding on that well-delivered concept with more weapon customisation, more scenarios and a shiny new Crime.Net career framework to add more layers to your criminal roleplaying.

This new mode effectively simulates the criminal underworld at its most despicable, with crime bosses, politicians and drug addicts all posting their jobs to a top-down map, with work alternating in real-time. One time you boot up into the career you’ll have one set of missions along with different

objectives, difficulty ratings, and rewards, whereas the next you’ll have new missions – all boasting their own number of phases and rewards. This system constructs missions and phases in almost a procedurally manner, so the amount of content on show far outpaces the original game.

Enemy AI and mission structure has also been tightened, allowing players to go full stealth in a mission. We were shown one scenario where a two-man team snuck into a jewellery shop and raided the safe without alerting the guards for a tidy dollar bonus. As before, any loot you grab from a mission is redeemed for dollars that can be spent towards unlocking new guns and other gear to help your robbing efforts. Skill points also return with classes now distilled into four archetypes – Ghost, Enforcer, Mastermind and Technician.

Appearing sleeker, nastier and more flexible than before, *Payday 2* expands this series into new directions while maintaining the gameplay fans love. It’s time to get the gang back together... ■



# DARK



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO](#)



Out 14th June

[www.getintothedark.com](http://www.getintothedark.com)

PC DVD ROM

Dark Copyright © 2013 Kalypso Media Group. All rights reserved. Developed by Realmforge Studios. Kinect, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft Corporation.

FirstLook |



**"One of the most surprising titles  
at Gamescom 2012"**

**Hooked Gamers**

**"DARK looks to make the  
stealth genre cool again"**

**- Gamercast**



**for Xbox 360**



**XBOX 360**

**kalypso**

**Pre order  
now from  
GAME  
IT'S NEVER JUST A GAME**

Published by Kalypso Media UK Ltd. All other logos, copyrights and trademarks are property of their respective  
group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft.



## DEFIANCE

A third-person shooter to stand the test of time

The closer *Defiance* gets to launch, the more we get the impression that Trion Worlds are trying to distance their game from the term 'MMO'. If that's the case we can't really blame them, as that term conjures up a lot of ill-feeling around slow combat, intimidating character progression and unfulfilling narratives. *Defiance* doesn't have any of that with the third-person shooter's structure more akin to an open-world game. Only one which you play

online with your friends all the time with the potential to team up to tackle missions or partake in some PvP at a moment's notice. Yes there is a complicated skills-based system and a grand narrative supported by a tie-in TV show, but if you just want to jump in and blow some stuff up with your mates for the evening, *Defiance* can absolutely accommodate that and all without the need to pay a monthly subscription.



PUB: TRION WORLDS  
DEV: INHOUSE  
PLATFORM: PC XBOX  
360 PS3  
ETA: APRIL 2011



## INJUSTICE: GODS AMONG US

PUB: WARNER BROS  
PLATFORM:  
XBOX 360 PS3  
ETA: APRIL 19TH

Who would win in a fight between Superman and Batman? Better yet, what would happen if these two heroic titans found themselves on the opposing sides of a philosophical struggle on how

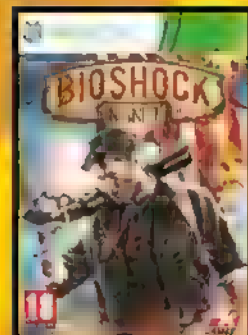
best to protect humanity from its own inevitable destruction? This is the next beat-'em-up from the makers of *Mortal Kombat*, NetherRealm Studios, but it's the intriguing story setup that has us so pumped.

## BIOSHOCK INFINITE

PUB: 2K GAMES  
DEV: IRON GUN GAMES  
PLATFORM: XBOX 360 PS3  
ETA: MAY 12TH

We'll be honest, we're going to miss *BioShock's* Rapture, but *Infinite's* city in the clouds Columbia seems almost as interesting, with its neoclassical buildings, air balloons and

groovy Skytrain. Here's hoping exploring this airy wonderland will be just as fun as its underwater cousin. One more thing, we'll miss those Big Daddies as well...





# SPLINTER CELL BLACKLIST

PUB: UBISOFT  
DEV: UBISOFT TORONTO  
PLATFORM: X360 PS3 PC WiiU  
ETA: AUGUST 2013



So the UK isn't getting the North American super special edition with its R/C recon plane, but that doesn't matter. The good news is that we finally have a release date for this

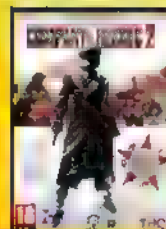
sequel/reboot, with Sam Fisher reforming Third Echelon to once again thwart an attack on American soil. As long as Sam has his patented tri-goggles he'll probably be alright.

PUB: SEGA  
DEV: RELIC ENTERTAINMENT  
PLATFORM: PC  
ETA: JUNE

## COMPANY OF HEROES 2

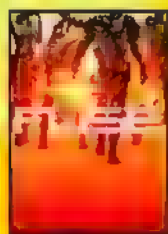
THQ are dead, but that doesn't mean the publisher's finest spoils have been left to rot. Case in point, *Company of Heroes 2*, which now has a release date thanks to SEGA picking

up Relic Entertainment during the liquidation madness. Set some time aside in June boys and girls, as you'll be too busy playing this RTS to want to do anything else.



## FUSE

PUB: ELECTRONIC ARTS  
DEV: SYMMONAC GAMES  
PLATFORM: PS3 XBOX 360  
ETA: SUMMER



Don't let the headless boxart fool you, as *FUSE* is a co-op game bursting with personality and originality. Starring four distinct archetypes, this new shooter from the makers

of *Resistance* features a shadowy agency trying to use alien tech for their own nefarious needs. Expect colourful environments and the craziest weapons ever seen.

## SHOOTMANIA: STORM



PUB: UBISOFT  
DEV: DICE  
PLATFORM: PC  
ETA: APRIL

Due to a lengthy open-Beta and finally being made available on Steam, a lot of gamers were talking about *ShootMania* this month. The multiplayer shooter allows players to create their own maps, game modes and content while focusing on twitch-centric combat. If a new *Quake* was on the horizon it'd play a lot like this.

## PLAYSTATION 4



PUB: SONY  
DEV: WHOLE  
ETA: END OF 2013 - MAYBE

Sony finally unveiled the PS4 last month, and understandably a lot of retailers are trying to cash in on that hype, even though the final launch date or price has yet to be confirmed for the console. Sure you can put your money down early to avoid disappointment, but bear in mind retailers know as little as you do about the PS4.

# CITIES MOTION<sup>®</sup>



**FirstLook** |





[CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO](#)



**paradox**  
INTERACTIVE

# ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

BIG REVEAL

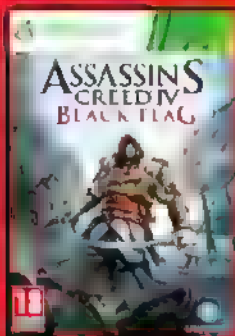
*"We've come a long way, mateys"*

Ubisoft's historical adventure series has already spanned five console titles, as well as over eight additional side games covering the mobile and portable platforms. It's now very much a household name and has become one of the most (if not *the* most) important IPs to Ubisoft. And with its sixth home console outing, *Black Flag*, *Assassin's Creed* gets ready to hit the next generation of consoles, already announcing its release on PlayStation 4 – and we'll most likely see it arrive on Microsoft's new console, though there's no official word yet. Current generation users need not despair, as *Black Flag* is coming to you too.

So what's next for those who hold the hidden blade? Well Desmond's story arc ended quite magnificently in

*Assassin's Creed III*. The game also finished with a rather outlandish cliffhanger, leaving eager fans of the franchise hungry for more. *Black Flag*'s announcement left a lot to be desired in regard to following on from *ACIII*'s story arc, with *Black Flag* actually running as a prequel to *ACIII*. Fans are just going to have to wait a lot longer to see how Juno's actions are played out on-screen.

In fact, very little was said on the *Black Flag*'s new present-day scenario. As Desmond is out of the picture, players will be working at Abstergo Entertainment and, more interestingly, as themselves. We're assuming there is some kind of avatar creator that will come in place here but nothing official was shown. Working for Abstergo Entertainment leaves players



**PUB:** UBISOFT  
**DEV:** UBISOFT  
**MONTREAL**  
**LAST GAME:**

**ASSASSIN'S CREED III**  
**PLATFORMS:** PC, XBOX  
360, PLAYSTATION 3,  
PLAYSTATION 4  
**ETA:** NOVEMBER 1ST






to examine the memories of Desmond Miles and his ancestors. The Animus now functions with the Cloud, allowing it to access memories of a subject seemingly without the person strapped in. One memory the corporation is specifically interested in is that of Edward Kenway, a notorious privateer turned pirate living life in the Caribbean. Which is where the majority of *Black Flag* is set.

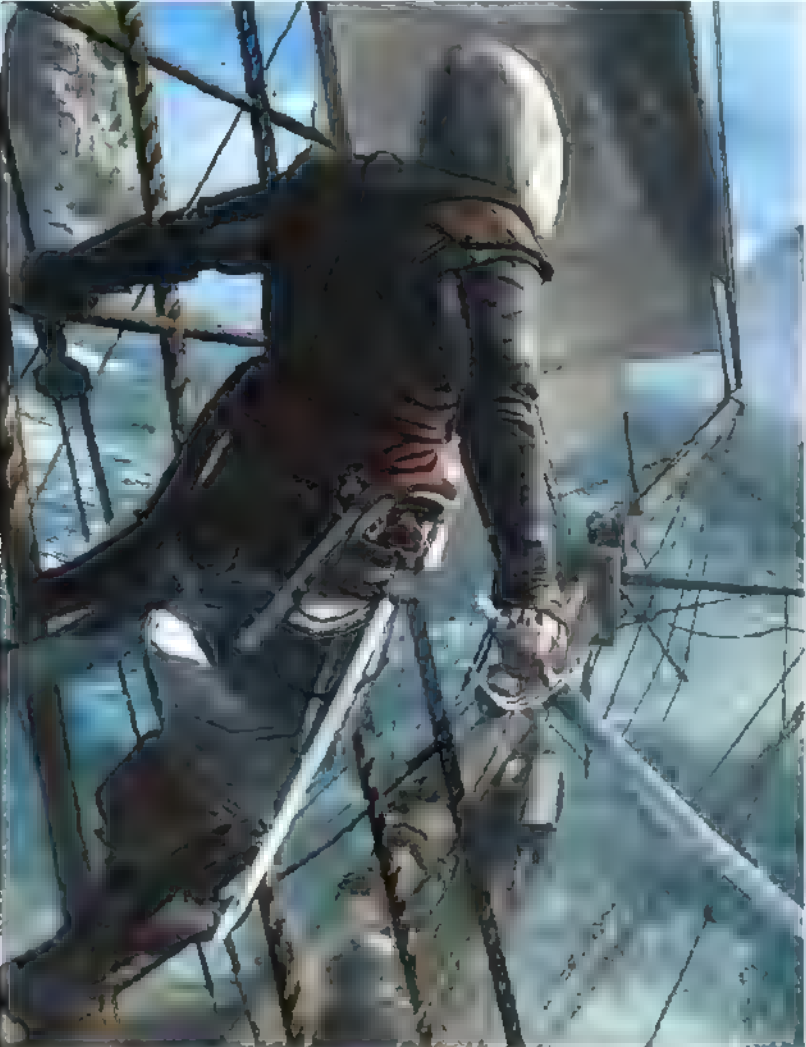
It's a stunning setting. No longer confined to dusty paths and stone castles, *Black Flag* allows you the freedom of sailing the Caribbean Sea, and there are many islands for you to explore at length.

The game boasts over 50 locales to visit at your leisure, though the majority of these will be split into side-quest specific islands such as ➤

"Assassin's Creed gets ready to hit the next generation of consoles, already announcing its release on PlayStation 4"



Ship versus ship combat will form a big portion of *Black Flag's* campaign



Hidden Caves, Jungles, Forts to conquer, Coconut Islands to find new recruits, plantations, fishing villages and even Mayan Ruins.

The three main cities that were announced included Cuba's capital

---

---

*"If killing sharks isn't enough for you then you'll also have the option of hunting whales, too"*

---

---

Havana, Jamaica's Kingston, and the pirate haven of Nassau. We assume the majority of the single-player story will take place in these cities.

### **SAIL THE SEVEN SEAS**

But how will you travel between each location, you ask? One new feature for the game is its new 'near seamless' loading between islands and cities. Instead of



Ubisoft are still being coy on the details surrounding hidden items, but we can imagine searching the watery depths for treasure will be in the game somewhere

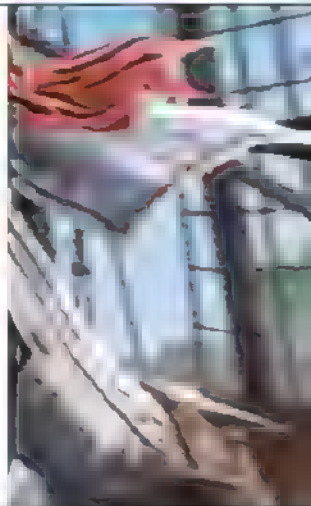


teleporting to new areas with specific maps, the game holds one large-scale map, which – according to Ubisoft – lets you sail across it without loading times.

You'll have your own ship, the Jackdaw, which will allow you to do all your travelling, as well as partake in naval battles and keep you busy with maintenance. You can also jump off and swim underwater to find hidden

treasure and fight sharks – if you're into that kind of thing

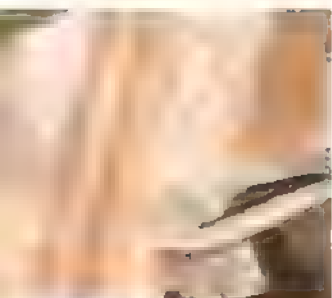
If killing sharks isn't enough for you then you'll also have the option of hunting whales for big money. But maintaining the Jackdaw is one of the most important aspects of the game. You'll need to hire and take care of your crew who can be lost to storms and sieges. You'll also need to keep your ship in tip- ➤



## MEET CLOUD KENWAY

This blonde doof and most surprisingly British privateer is Assassin's Creed's new protagonist. Grandfather to ACIII hero Connor and father to colonial Templar Haytham, Edward Kenway is a mix of dashing and charismatic Englishman to ruthless and selfish pirate.

A member of the Assassin Order and motivated by fame and money, Kenway's motives are currently mixed. It's also unknown what caused him to enter the world of piracy and leave his privateer life behind. His armoury boasts a total of four pistols, two cutlass swords, as well as the iconic hidden blades.



top condition, adding upgrades for speed and battle.

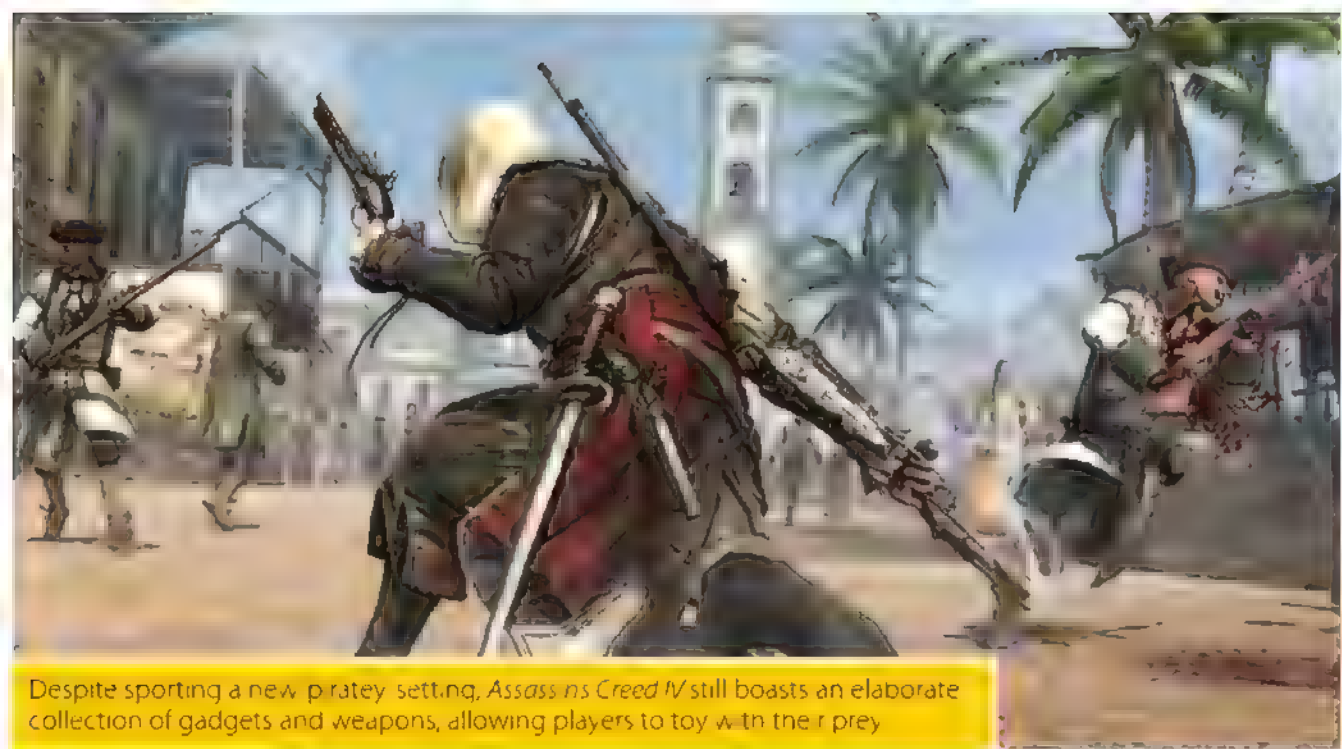
### **HISTORY LESSON**

Keeping in theme with Ubisoft's obsession with historical accuracy, the

story will mix real-life events into its fictional ones. History buffs might be interested to see how *Black Flag* will interpret the assault on 42 Portuguese ships, the wreck of the Spanish Armada, the escape from Nassau or







Despite sporting a new piratey setting, *Assassin's Creed IV* still boasts an elaborate collection of gadgets and weapons, allowing players to toy with their prey

even the marooning of Charles Vane.

Real-life pirates even come out to play with the most infamous of them all, Blackbeard – who plays an integral role in the main story, though it's yet to be known in what capacity.

It's the golden age of piracy that

---

***"Past Assassin's Creeds have taught us to stay weary of mediocre side-romps"***

---

*Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag* is eager to unveil. Pirate fans should be excited for a game that seems focused more on exploration and treasure hunting than just a story to wind away the time. It's open-world in a true way, but past *Assassin's Creeds* have taught us to stay weary of mediocre side-romps that had lost fine-tuning in place for bountiful amounts of yawn-inducing

content. And with the unveiling of its next generation direction, *Assassin's Creed IV's* looks have yet to impress. It's common ground, but only short demonstrations of gameplay were shown, resulting in a feeling that the game looks more end of a generation than next. Though early titles in a new console's cycle always look a bit iffy, it's *Black Flag's* sheer scale that impresses. It looks good but isn't dropping jaws, which is for a new entry in the usually gorgeous *Assassin's Creed* series is a new issue for the property.

The yearly franchise has such a specific and familiar formula now that the idea of running around another city and doing the same odd jobs feels almost tiring.

There's a lot yet to be unveiled, and if *Black Flag* switches up AC's ageing gameplay, then it could be the last hurrah of this generation. ■



**PreOrderIQ**

*Click here for up-to-date prices and offers now!*

STAR  
HEARD OF



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO](#)

12:00

[VIEW FULL](#)



**FirstLook** |





# STAR CRAFT®

THE SWARM™

13.13

ALL TRAILER

PREVIEW

# TOTAL WAR: ROME II

PREVIEW



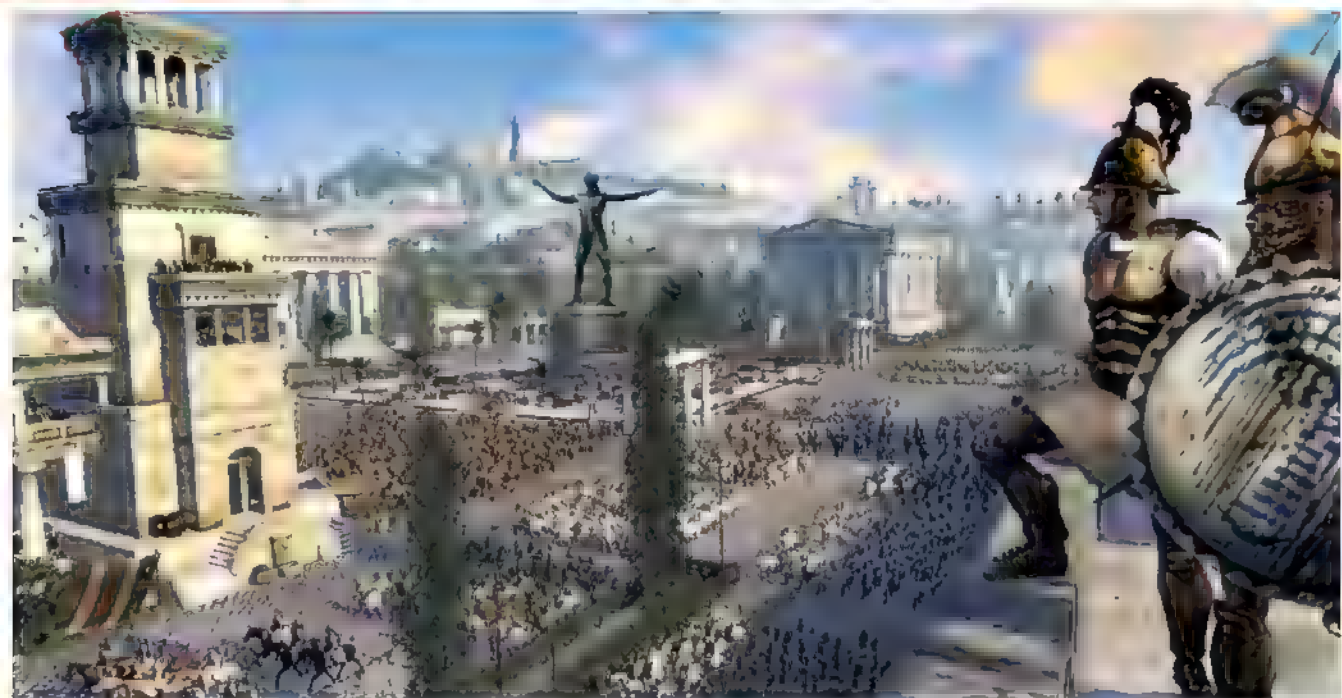
**PUB:** SEGA  
**DEV:** THE CREATIVE  
ASSEMBLY  
**LAST GAME:** TOTAL  
WAR: SHOGUN 2  
**PLATFORMS:** PC  
**ETA:** 2013

*"Quintilius Varus, give me back my legions!"*

If there was one thought running through our minds while watching *Total War: Rome II* in action it was that it's time to get a new PC. Gamers tend to look to the heavy hitters like Crytek or Epic to push the graphical boundaries of their machines, but Creative Assembly's new battle engine is an impressive beast which we suspect will push modern PCs to their limit.


As is usually the case with *Total War*, the devil is in the detail with this new graphics engine offering enough fidelity that each individual

soldier on the battlefield boasts enough variety in their animations, insignia design and facial expressions to successfully put across the impression that they are more than just copy and pasted clones. This is all part of Creative Assembly's ambition to eliminate the problem of players feeling too remote from the action they're orchestrating. Instead they want to humanise units to such an extent that players feel connected to them, in a way that means they'll feel more than a tinge of regret as they send



**FirstLook** | Preview





"Creative Assembly's  
new battle engine is an  
impressive beast which we  
suspect will push modern  
PCs to their limit"



them to their deaths for good of a much larger strategic plan.

To show off this new side of this acclaimed strategy franchise, we were shown one of the standalone historical battles based on the Roman Empire's infamous defeat at the Battle of Teutoburg Forest in 9AD. This standalone battle, which is able to be played independent of the campaign, was prefaced by a gloomy cut-scene showing the deranged Caesar Augustus screaming out to the heavens, "Quintilius Varus, give me back my legions!" before the camera

swooped into the sky and panned back down, centring on a member of the Roman legion marching single-file in a desolate forest while

---

*"Germania's Barbarian horde watched silently, waiting for the perfect moment to strike"*

---

Germania's barbarian horde watched, silently waiting for the perfect



## DEPLOYABLES

On the pre-battle formation screen players will be able to drop down deployable weapons and defensive structures such as sharp stone beds to slow down infantry travel, sharp caltrops to impede cavalry charges and giant flaming boulders to fling at marching infantry. These are just some of the options available to Generals, but they are part of a wider effect to make planning for battles more important in *Total War: Rome II*.

The odd staples of heavy and light infantry tying together with archer attacks and cavalry charges rings true, but deployables offer a new dimension for Generals to surprise their enemies.



Whatever Roman faction you choose they'll be the dominant force in the Empire, but you still need to keep other families happy



moment to strike. This ambush scenario is one of the famous battles of the Roman period thanks to a military commander with German heritage, known as Arminius, betraying his adopted homeland for his natural one leading the 17th, 18th and 19th Roman legions into a deadly ambush.

All of this historical context is portrayed with a combination of cinematics and in-engine cut-scenes, and the dramatic impact of these scenes far outweighs anything achieved in *Shogun 2*. Rather than historical battles acting as the redheaded step-child to *Rome II*'s sandbox-like campaign, we think this mode will have a bigger impact this time around.

### "AT MY SIGNAL, UNLEASH HELL"

Back in 9AD, The Battle of Teutoburg Forest involved 10,000-15,000 combatants and lasted around three days. *Rome II*'s take on the battle involves just as many men and lasts around 30 minutes, with the ambush mission involving Roman

# INTERVIEW

## Lead Battle Designer

It's nearly a decade since the original *Rome: Total War* came out in 2004. How do you meet player expectations regarding this long-awaited sequel, and how do you bring something new to the table that people won't kick up a fuss about?

(Laughs) Well it depends on which people you're talking about kicking up a fuss! I don't think there is going to be anybody disappointed with this game. There are a lot of things that we can do now that we certainly couldn't do back then. In terms of just the detail and quality of everything you look at, that has just changed immeasurably. There is no similarity whatsoever between *Rome* and *Rome II* on that level. That goes right through from the graphics and the visuals to the gameplay itself. We've actually completely overhauled the way the combat system works, the way the animations work, the way the units themselves work and how they're put together.

In terms of battlefields themselves, we've completely overhauled the terrain generation system. We now have naval battles, and for the original game that was just a pipedream! And the line of sight system we had in the original game was based very loosely on proximity and it worked in only limited circumstances. Now on every single unit we use the GPU to detect what they can actually see and look at it in a true line-of-sight fashion.

Each unit has its own strengths and weaknesses according to what it can see and what it can't. For example, if you have an heavily armed unit then you'll have a situation where they won't be able to spot anything because they're covered head to toe in metal. As a result of that you get a very closed-in view of the world, and that is reflected in what they can and can't notice. All of these things are signalled to the player by the type of unit it is, or the environment itself. For example, in the ambush battle in Teutoburg Forest you don't see enemy troops until the very last moment when they come out of the woods.

**Previous *Total Wars* did have that principle, but it felt very gamey. Today we saw a player trying to fight back against an ambush by using cavalry, only for the unit to get swamped itself by another ambush waiting in the wings. That was something *Total War* games never really had before as the ambushes felt so binary.**

That's the thing, we've managed to unlock something there that is emergent based on something else that we had done. We're looking to do that with every land battle in terms of how they fight. We're looking at the possibility of having both sides being able to hide all of their units. It used to be the case

# PREVIEW



The new combat engine allows players to get closer to battle than ever before

forces fighting to get to the end of a narrow path located at the end of the map, while Germanian archers and berserkers appear from the trees with irregular frequency to slim down their numbers. Aided by battlefield deployables, like rolling fire boulders,

the Roman forces, consisting of mounted cavalry, archers and legionnaires, were outnumbered and outmatched. As forces were marshalled further up the path, more enemy ranks appeared and with *Rome II*'s new line-of-sight system, which hides units based on your unit sightlines (surprisingly this is a new addition to the series), now it's possible to orchestrate and be victims of proper ambush attacks.

The sight of sending in mounted cavalry to dispatch some troublesome fire archers only to have the versatile force swamped immediately by newly emerging German berserkers was enough to make us wince in tactical agony. Watching the felled horses and routing soldiers getting hit with armour-piercing axes was genuinely uncomfortable viewing. That isn't due to the game's inherent gore or anything like that, soldiers still keep their appendages when they



The new line of sight system means that ambushes feel much more realistic





perish. It's just having the camera get this close to the action – potentially to the detriment of your overall strategy – means that *Rome II* achieves its goal of making battles appear more human

Likewise they also look a lot cooler, be it the Legionnaire's testudo formation, or soldiers switching from their primary spears to second sword

---

***"Rome II achieves its goal of making battles appear much more human"***

---

weapons as they charge into another unit. *Rome II* has reached a new level of battle emulation, and it's simply a wonder to behold.

The battle ended with one solitary Roman unit, plus standard bearer, making it to the safe zone on the outskirts of the forest, which was

# INTERVIEW

that you had a star floating over your general saying, "Look, he's over here". Part of that was because we felt it would maybe be hard to locate those guys, but by the introduction of stuff like baggage train [battles] we've got a situation where for a defender that option is perfectly fine because if they don't protect their baggage train they've lost the battle anyway. It doesn't matter it doesn't matter that their forces haven't been killed, as losing the battle has disastrous consequences when you're on the campaign map. There's lots of things we've changed about the entire game. I think you'd be hard pushed to point out the similarities between *Rome* and *Rome II*.

**The original *Rome* captured the public zeitgeist more than perhaps any other *Total War* game. Do you anticipate a lot of gamers coming back to the *Total War* series purely for *Rome II*?**

We've certainly come across a few people who have sparked up and said, "This is what I've been waiting for!" And we're all very excited about that.

**Creative Assembly have retreaded a lot of old ground in the *Total War* series. Where would you anticipate the series goes next and are you guys thinking about that as you're developing *Rome II*?**

We don't stop thinking about the future just because we're working on a particular project. We obviously put a lot of effort and time into making sure that each game gets all the love and attention it deserves, but that doesn't stop us thinking about what we're going to be doing next. At the end of every game we do, we also reassess based on what we've done and what we're going to do next. We look at technology and timeframes, what we can do with the time that we've got, and whether we can actually do justice to whatever it is that might be our new subject. With *Shogun 2*, we hadn't refreshed that game since it first started came out, and it was the game that started the whole thing.

**It was essentially a different game to the original *Shogun* in scope and design...**

You couldn't compare *Shogun 2* to anything really, other than what it was as a successor to *Shogun*. That's the same thing with *Rome II*. We've moved on so far from the original game that we aren't rehashing old ground. We're actually making new ground and doing new things with gameplay that's vastly different in a lot of ways. There's a lot of elements that are familiar like strategising, control and a turn-based campaign so you won't be completely lost if you haven't played our more recent games, but it's all different; it's all changed.

**PREVIEW**

"The battle ended with one solitary Roman unit, plus standard bearer, making it to the safe zone"







Cities are no longer as template-orientated as they were before. Now players will be able to see them visually evolve as they add new buildings and research new tech.

enough for the battle to be considered a victory. The amount of bloodshed and bodies scattered around the battlefield made this apparent success seem very hollow indeed. While watching the battle unfold we did witness some other interesting new additions, like a 2D map view which allows players to instantly survey the battle and a dynamic cinematic camera which highlights key moments as they play out, such as a new unit emerging or forces routing.

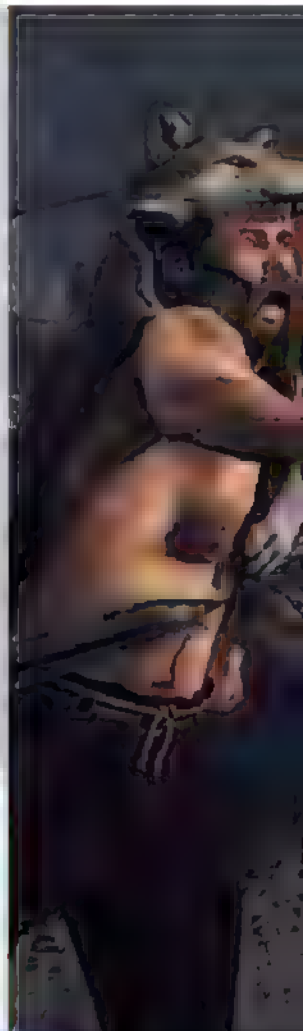
Obviously the battle engine is just one part of *Rome II*, with the other being the campaign map and even though we weren't show that side of the game, we did get to chat to Lead Campaign Designer Janos Gaspar. He told us of a new stance system which means forces can now be made to ambush forces on a particular part of the map, build up portable forts or be forced to march to a location much

quicker than their default stance, as well as a new province system with players able to take over just key parts of a province like mines, ports and camps rather than invading the territory wholesale. No doubt more details will be revealed about this side of *Rome II* closer to game's undefined '2013' launch.

The Roman period has always been the best fit for the *Total War* series in our opinion, and it's clear Creative Assembly have waited for their own tech to get good enough to give this cherished era the kind of emulation it clearly deserves. Yes this new battle engine will cause us and many others to buy new rigs to get the most out of it, but you know what? It's going to be absolutely worth it. ■

**PreOrderIQ**

Click here for up-to-date  
prices and offers now!





12

[www.pegi.info](http://www.pegi.info)

# TRICON

FACEBOOK COMMENT

© 2004 Blackwell Publishing Ltd, *Journal of Internal Medicine* 255: 103–110

# FirstLook





**CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO**

**NEW AND RETURNING PLAYERS!**

**[RIFTGAME.COM/EN/LITE](http://RIFTGAME.COM/EN/LITE)**

**LEVELS 1-20**

**NO CREDIT CARD REQUIRED**

**NO TIME LIMIT**

## DARK

HANDS-ON

*More stealth, less action!*

**S**tealth games as we know them are dead. Wait, scratch that. They aren't dead, they've just morphed into something more action packed. The likes of Solid Snake and Sam Fisher are no longer as patient as they used to be, blasting away at patrolling guards rather than taking the traditional route of ducking behind a corner and waiting for the poor saps to move on. Games like *Dishonored* say they're stealth games, but really when you're packing a veritable arsenal in your coat pocket, the

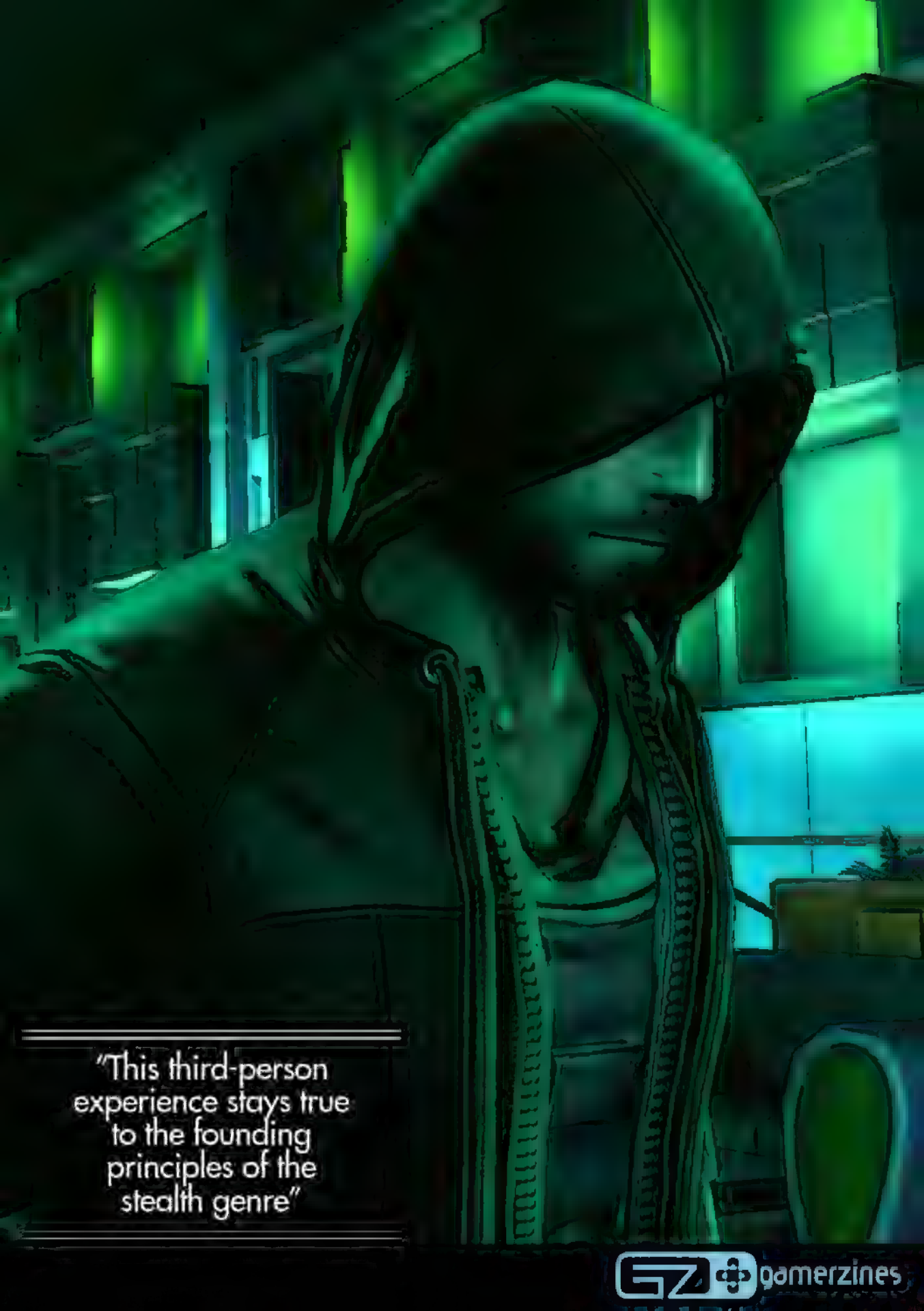
temptation to go loud and forget any pretence of stealth is frankly too easy. To its credit, *Dark* doesn't offer players such indulgences. Instead, this third person experience stays true to the founding principles of the stealth genre, with players cast as a vulnerable vampire named Eric Bane who boasts no long range weapons whatsoever. His main weapon is his supernatural strength and ability to feed, with the gloomy character able to teleport short distances and knockout guards with a quick one-two combo. ➤



**PUB:** KALYPSO  
**DEV:** REALMFORGE  
**STUDIOS**  
**LAST GAME:**  
**DUNGEONS:**  
**THE DARK LORD**  
**PLATFORMS:** PC,  
XBOX 360,  
PLAYSTATION 3  
**ETA:** JUNE





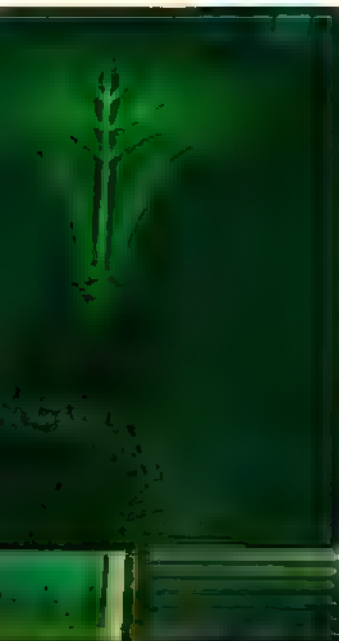
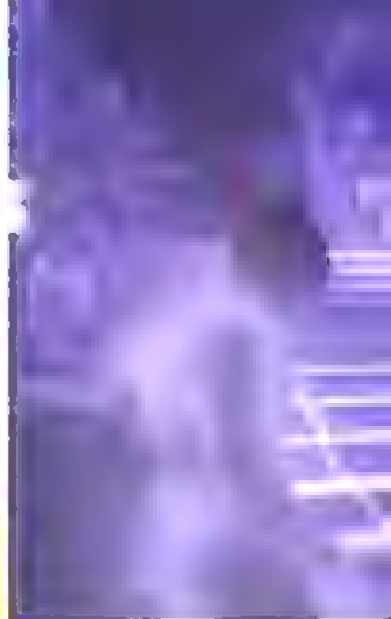


"This third-person  
experience stays true  
to the founding  
principles of the  
stealth genre"

## PREVIEW



Sneaking around feels tense and strangely exhilarating



This deliberately disarming design choice forces players to resort to skulking around environments and stalking their prey much like the challenge *Velvet Assassin* and *Hitman* boasted back in the day. However, layered on top of this is an intriguing occult theme with vampires fighting against a paramilitary faction known as M 17 who are trying to harness the vampire form to create unstoppable super soldiers.

As premises go, *Dark's* is certainly original, faithfully upturning the traditional power struggle of humans

fleeing from the insatiable thirst of the night clan. Predictably enough, central to this power struggle is Bane, who begins the game lying unconscious in the men's room of a dingy nightclub. Haunted by visions of an angel cast in white light, the gravelly devil voiced by Doug Cockle (Geralt from *The Witcher*) has no memory of who he is or how he managed to be comatose on the white tiled floor.

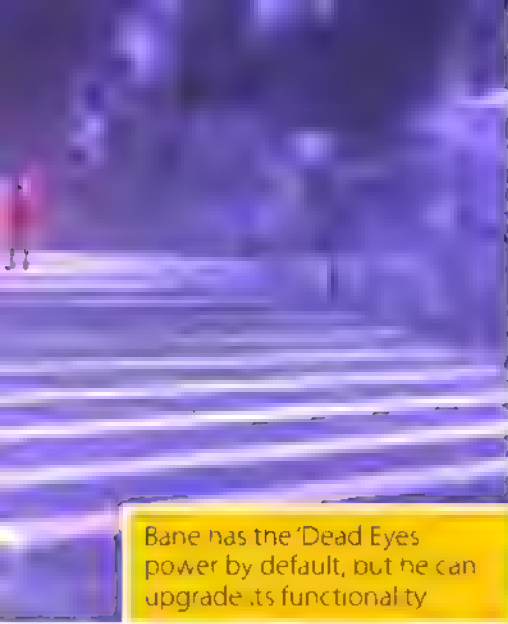
The amnesia-riddled protagonist bit has been done to death in pretty much every medium that matters,

## SKILLS THAT KILL

For all intents and purposes, the majority of *Dark's* gameplay involves players staying out of trouble, but that doesn't mean there isn't a hefty skill tree to pad out. Split between passive and active powers, unlocks vary from being able to teleport further to being able to drain guards of life-giving blood without making any noise and therefore avoiding being discovered by their mates around the corner. Inevitably enough, in the campaign there will be times when you have to fight, and when you do these unlocks will prove invaluable.







Bane has the 'Dead Eyes' power by default, but he can upgrade its functionality

but *Dark* isn't exactly a game to be taken too seriously. This is emphasised in the multi-branched dialogue system, with Bane able to quiz key characters on the nature of his early vampire form, the perils of transmutable diseases and anything else to pad out this new universe. The quality of the voice-acting is all over the place, with some lines delivered way too seriously while others just fall flat, but the uneven nature of *Dark* is almost part of its charm.

In the campaign, the Sanctuary nightclub acts as a hub which players constantly return to between missions. Aside from the occasional side-quest within the nightclub, *Dark* seems fairly linear, with Bane committed to tracking down the individual who initiated his body into the vampire ranks before he turns into a mindless Bat-like drone. Realmforge are certainly taking some liberties with the traditional vampire premise, but thankfully the studio's efforts are as far away from *Twilight*'s depressingly emotional take on Transylvania's most famous export, ➤

# INTERVIEW

VICTOR LINKI

## Art Director

**The thing that surprised us the most about *Dark* is how close the gameplay sticks to the traditions of the stealth genre. Do you see *Dark* as part of a big sneak-'em-up revival?**

Yeah, many of the old stealth franchises like *Splinter Cell* have become more action-orientated. We're all big fans of *Thief* and old *Splinter Cell* games so we just wanted to make a game that was purely based around stealth. The main decision was to take out all of the weapons in the game, so you have no choice to use any shooting weapons or guns, so you really have to play *Dark* as an old-school stealth game.

***Dishonored* was the last big stealth game to be released, but even in that game you could play as aggressively as you wanted. It seems that *Dark*'s protagonist Bane is a much more fragile character than *Dishonored*'s Corvo. Do you think that fragility could put gamers off?**

People want to seek that experience, because they can get the action part everywhere else. Of course we don't have the budget or the team size to make this a triple-A blockbuster game, so we really tried to concentrate on what we could do well, so we took this one feature (sneaking) and built the whole game around that idea.

**Marrying stealth gameplay with the Vampire concept is unusual, as vampires are traditionally seen as very powerful. Do you think that's another area where *Dark* stands out?**

Yeah of course, because vampires have a bit of a bad reputation at the moment. The whole mythology of vampires is that they live in this shadow society hiding from humanity, so the stealth aspect is very much integrated into the whole vampire lore. We thought those two concepts would be good to put together.

**We got a *Blade* vibe from walking around the club hub, with characters talking about political conspiracies and such. How deep do you delve into that underworld concept in the game?**

Over the course of the game you encounter an organisation called M-17 and basically they're vampire hunters. They're trying to get their own super-charged soldiers with vampire abilities, and they have these kind of shadow companies for the benefit of the public. Vampires have their own fronts as well. They're both fighting against each other and everybody sees that, but nobody knows what's really going on.

## PREVIEW

Seeing as all of Bane's attacks that we know of are melee-based, you need to be close to notch up a kill. Just make sure you hide the body.



so at the very least that's something to be grateful for.

Once we took on a mission, *Dark's* RPG-esque ambitions faded into the background as we infiltrated a museum to hunt down the whereabouts of a fellow vampire named Blooming. Here the stealth tropes kicked in good and proper

with Bane able to cling to cover, knock out guards and feast on their fleshy form to fuel special powers like his 'Dead Eyes' which can detect guards through walls and 'Shadow Leap' short distances in a flash of black smoke. These two powers are just a taste of the game's vast skill tree. The better you do in missions, by staying out of sight and taking guards

---

*"Knockout guards and feast on their fleshy form to fuel special powers"*

---

down quickly, the more points you earn which can then be fed directly into unlocking new powers. Guard patterns were easy to spot and their view and hearing range seemed fair yet sensitive, however Bane's form even on normal difficulty seemed very weak, as he was only able to withstand a second or so of gunfire.

*Dark* certainly satisfied a lot of the yearnings we have for the increasingly







marginalised stealth genre. Occasionally frustrating, but ultimately satisfying, this release does boast a couple of modern improvements such as a generous checkpoint save system so you don't lose minutes of progress, hidden items that are actually worth searching out in the guise of PDAs with sensitive emails plastered onto the screen, and challenge rooms to complete outside of the main campaign.

Realmforge aren't trying to reinvent the stealth genre with *Dark*. This sneak-'em-up is, in many ways, as traditional as it gets, but there's more than enough gamers out there who feel sidelined by the modern obsession with guns and explosions to warrant its existence. Here's hoping *Dark* can fulfil a niche which all too often disappoints. ■

# INTERVIEW

**Splicing this premise with a comic-book aesthetic is kind of a no-brainer, as it fits the premise perfectly and allows you to have a distinct visual style while dialling down the fidelity on character models. Was that the plan all along?**

Yeah, because we're a team of 15-20 people. On games like *Splinter Cell* Ubisoft has six hundred guys working on the project, so we had to do something different. We had to make the game look good as players still pay money to play the game and they want to have good graphics, so the cell-shading style is always good to make a game look appealing without having a powerful engine like CryEngine3. That was one choice. Another was even though our game takes place in a dark world, we still wanted to have a bit of colour in the levels. We've colour-coded all the missions, so none of them look the same. The Geoforge tower stage for instance has a very green look, whereas another level later on has more of a bluish hue.

**Speaking of light, how do you guys deal with sunlight? Will vampires perish if they take in a little sun?**

There is sunlight (laughs)! It isn't a gameplay mechanism, but it does play a part in the story.

***Dark* also changes vampire lore with regards to the initial transformation, which is broken up into two stages with the first stage leaving the character weak and vulnerable. As Bane's story progresses, will he eventually become a damage-absorbing badass, or will he stay vulnerable throughout the game?**

He will do more awesome things over the course of the story, but basically our vampires are a bit different from the traditional lore. We look at them as more like X-Men, because if you become a vampire you can have very different abilities to other vampires. If you talk to DJ June and April the bartender in Sanctuary they will tell you all the vampires have different skills. Some are so strong that they can throw around cars, whereas others can just dissolve into smoke, so every vampire has their own skillset.

**The appeal of stealth games is built around challenge and tension, and while playing *Dark* we noticed that the game autosaves every couple of minutes. How important do you think a good autosave system is?**

It isn't bound to rooms, so we strategically place the autosaves. We just noticed that if somebody goes through the room carefully taking out every guard and then dies, it would be really frustrating to just plonk them back at the beginning of a mission. We really wanted the player to have a challenge but not be frustrated by the game.

**PreOrderIQ**

Click here for up-to-date prices and offers now!

# LEVIATHAN™ WARSHIPS



**FirstLook** |





[CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO](#)





# BROTHERS: A TALE OF TWO SONS

A NEW KIND OF CINEMATIC ADVENTURE

**BROTHERS**

**PUB:** 505 GAMES  
**DEV:** STARBREEZE  
**STUDIOS**

**LAST GAME:**

**SYNDICATE**

**PLATFORMS:** PC,

XBOX 360,

PLAYSTATION 3

**ETA:** MAY 31ST

**T**he game industry is full of talented creators who do their best to emulate the 'Hollywood' way of storytelling. David Cage (*Heavy Rain*) Hideo Kojima (*Metal Gear Solid Series*) are two of the names which immediately spring to mind, but studios like Telltale Games, BioWare and Naughty Dog also emulate their big screen peers constantly.

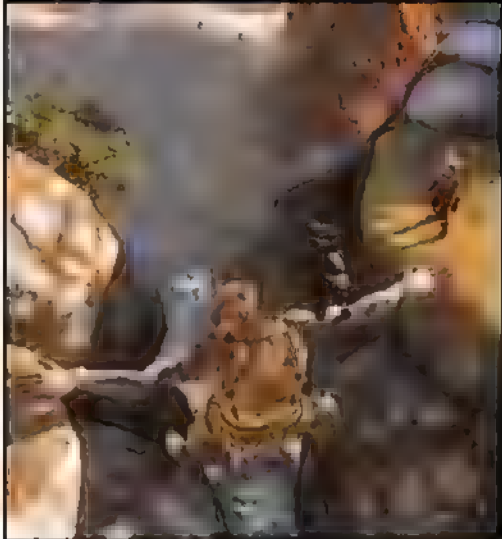
You'd expect *Brothers: A Tale of Two Sons* to follow closely in those footsteps, as the digital release's development is being headed by acclaimed Swedish writer/director Josef Fares, but instead it seems his debut release has much

more in common with *Journey* or *Papa & Yo*. The moviemaker is stepping away from established game storytelling tropes like dialogue and cut-scenes, with a world which is ripe for exploration, experimentation and interaction.

"Games have their own way of storytelling," he told us. "Interactivity is the most important aspect of games, for me honestly. I think this interactive art is going to be bigger than films, music, everything!"

Personal investment will be key to this process and that's something *Brothers* has in spades with the two young vulnerable protagonists looking for a cure





to their father's soon-to-be fatal illness. A cheery subject, then.

The premise sounds dark, but visually and tonally, *Brothers* is actually rather light and family-friendly, with jibberish-speaking characters and an identifiably Nordic setting actually channelling a lot of *Fable's* cute fantasy charm.

Where *Brothers* is really set apart from its peers though, is its control scheme. Players control both brothers at the same time, with the older sibling controlled via the left thumbstick, while the younger, cheekier relation is guided by the right. Initially this control scheme seems daunting, especially as the ➤

# INTERVIEW

## JOSEF FARES

### GAME DIRECTOR

The games industry has a lot of developers who look to emulate Hollywood – notable examples include *Metal Gear Solid's* Hideo Kojima and *Heavy Rain's* David Cage. You've gone the opposite route, from being a successful director to developing games at Starbreeze Studios. What do you think about developers who ape Hollywood so absolutely?

I really like *Heavy Rain*, *The Walking Dead* and all those but I don't believe that's the future of gaming from a creative perspective. I remember when I played *Heavy Rain* I put it on easy mode, because I only wanted to experience the graphics and the story. For me that isn't a game, for me the interactive side is what I think is fun. I really appreciate those games. It isn't that I don't like them, I just don't believe they are the future. Coming from a film background many people thought I would make a game like that, but I want gameplay and interactivity all the time.

When a character starts somewhere and ends somewhere else, I want that whole journey to be interactive. *Brothers* has that and I'm extremely proud of it. You'll feel what I'm talking about when you play the game, as it's very personal. The longest cut-scene we have is 40 seconds. They're very short as it's important to be interactive; to allow play all the time.

***Brothers* doesn't have traditional dialogue, with characters articulating and sounding out their motivations without using language. Was that a design/budget limitation or is that always the way you wanted the game to be?**

That's the way I wanted to play the story and convey the personality of both the brothers. Of course, if it's a game I want to play, I'll watch the cut scenes but [as a developer] trying to get away from cut-scenes is a good thing. The important thing is the gameplay, as that's where all the fun is. Games have their own way of storytelling. The interactivity is the most important aspect of games, for me honestly I think this interactive art is going to be bigger than films, music, everything! At the end of the day, people want to get emotionally attached, and if that happens with the person interacting [with the medium] at the same time then that's immensely powerful.

**Do you think it's better for a game to have multiple paths, where a player can potentially change the way a narrative ends, or do you think it's better for games to have a singular story thread throughout which players cannot deviate from?**

## PREVIEW

Appearances can be deceiving in *Brothers*. This troll is actually a gentle giant rather than a bone-crushing murderer. His muffled crying gave it away.

Tying all interaction to only two buttons means that *Starbreeze* don't need to telegraph every potential action to the player.

camera's dynamically controlled by a AI director. Soon though, this scheme becomes second nature and oddly feels similar to a first-person shooter with your mind adapting to manage both brothers in tandem.

Interacting with the environment is delegated to the trigger buttons – left for the older brother and right for the younger. This simplicity is echoed by the game's puzzle design and environment interaction, with our 20-minute demo seeing the brothers tour around a local village, and meet a crying troll who helped them get closer to a magical cave which may or may not hold their father's cure.

On the way there were ample opportunities to interact with villagers, including a girl playing netball, a elderly lady swaying back and forth in her rocking chair and a man practicing his harp skills. Interactions in this environment are limited to two responses,

with the older brother doing the more responsible thing like helping a villager sweep their front porch, whereas the younger brother would play the broom like a guitar.

It's these moments that faithfully communicate each character's personality, and

---

---

***"Brothers is, essentially, a puzzle game in an attractive adventure game mould"***

---

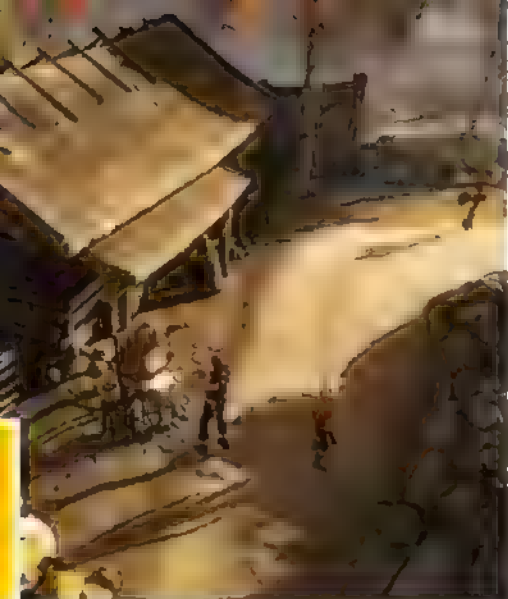
---

there's plenty of scope for players to think outside of the box – for instance, chucking the girl's ball down a well or everybody playing catch together. These moments feel organic and encourage experimentation in a really rewarding way.

Essentially a puzzle game in an attractive adventure game mould, *Brothers* boasts a visual style and an atmosphere which is absolutely its own. This is

We definitely got an *Ico* vibe from *Brothers*, but seeing as players get to control both 'brotaginists' at once, there's less chance of game-ending snafus.





something Josef told us he wants to keep up throughout the entire campaign, with the slender three-four hour running time punctuated with environments and gameplay challenges that'll only be seen once. "Game designers re-use too much stuff," he told us

Yosef and Starbreeze are holding back a lot of content in order for it to be a surprise when players sit down and actually play *Brothers*, but we've seen enough to be excited about the prospects of this charming release.

The games industry isn't short of its share of wannabe movie directors, so it's fascinating to see a filmmaker leave his own industry to have a go at our favourite craft. No doubt the results of Josef's work will be similarly intriguing. ■

**PreOrderIQ**

Click here for up-to-date prices and offers now!

# INTERVIEW CONT.

I understand the appeal of choosing different endings, but I much prefer it when developers have a vision and there's a story which players are being told and that's the way it's supposed to be told. I don't re-play games; I like to play them once and that's it. In *Fable* you could marry everyone (after a while you could marry all of the town if you wanted) but instead of doing that I would've preferred it if you had a choice of marrying only three different partners and build on them by making them all have a really strong emotional connection.

**With *Fable*, we remember marrying potentially any person in the game world was a big deal at the time, even though like you say, it didn't amount to much in gameplay terms. Do you think that kind of feature-creep mindset comes from big teams trying to do too much, rather than doing a few things really well?**

Sadly, game development is very publisher-controlled. The good thing about 505 Games is that they let us develop our game. I think many games have been destroyed by publishers interfering too much and changing elements because they believe it'll make it sell more as a result. Sure, we have to respect that game development costs money, but also at the same time we all have to understand that we aren't working in a factory. We're working with art here and creative people. We have to understand that to make a great product, you have to put your heart and passion into it.

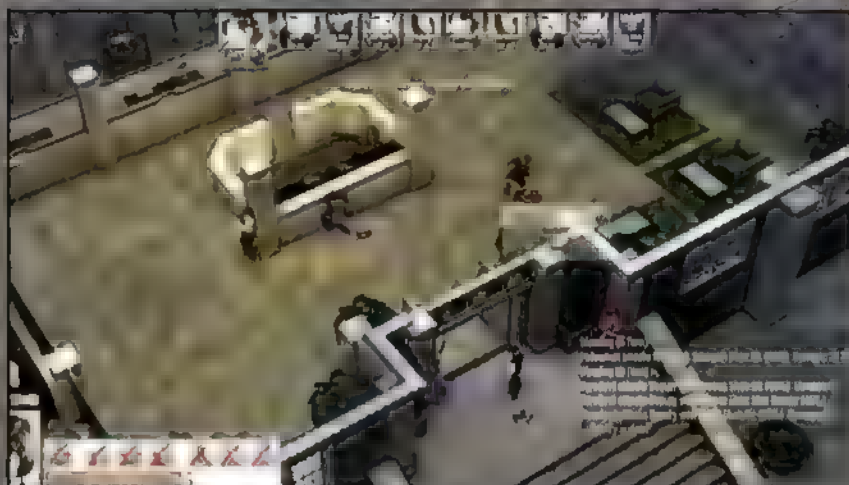
***Brothers* is a game which takes a lot of risks, none more so perhaps than having two adolescent brothers as the main protagonists. Why did you go for these two characters?**

I don't know, it's just part of the story. It's very touching that you have two kids trying to save their father. If they were grown-ups they would be more mature and act differently, but it's also because I truly love all the 16-bit RPG games like *Chrono Trigger* and *Zelda: Link to the Past*. That's one of the inspirations I have for this game, along with *Another World*.

**Do you think developers should concentrate more on creating unique protagonists?**

Oh yeah, but I think developers do and many games will in the future. Good things are happening in the industry from a creative perspective. Don't get me wrong, I truly have an understanding from an economic perspective. I don't think that we're going to let the creative people just take over! We need to have people that understand that we're dealing with a business, but also a creative business. I think if you combine both of those things into a perfect symbiotic relationship then you get the best quality.

# **OMERTA** **CITY OF GANGSTERS**




[CLICK HERE TO WATCH VIDEO](#)

**OUT 1ST FEBRUARY FOR PC  
AND XBOX 360**



[WWW.CITYOFGANGSTERS.COM](http://WWW.CITYOFGANGSTERS.COM)

**PC** 

Omerta - City of Gangsters Copyright © 2013 Kalypso Media Group. All rights reserved. Developed by Kalypso Media Group. Microsoft, Xbox, and the Xbox logo are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license.

**FirstLook** |



"...A CONTENDER FOR THE 'GANGSTERS' RELEASE FOR THE CURRENT GENERATION"

GAMEREADY

"OMERTA LOOKS LIKE AN OFFER I CAN'T REFUSE!"

GAMESPY

"ONE OF THE FINEST STRATEGY GAMES ON THIS YEAR'S CALENDAR"

360GAMER



PRE ORDER NOW  
FROM

**zavvi.com**  
FREE UK AND EUROPEAN DELIVERY



Gaming Excellence  
Nominee  
Best of E3 2012



Strategy Informer  
Best In Show  
Gamescom 2012



Thirteen1  
Best In Show  
Gamescom 2012



HAEMIMONT  
GAMES

**kalypso**

Developed by Haemimont Games. Published by Kalypso Media UK Ltd. Kinect, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of Microsoft. All other logos, copyrights and trademarks are property of their respective owner.

**GZ**  **gamerzines**

## CITIES IN MOTION 2

DEMO-ED



POP: 100%  
DEV: 100%  
LAST GAME: 100%  
PLATFORMS: 100%

## TWITTER



**@maximiliano**

First in-game footage from Cities in Motion 2! More busses! More tram! <http://fb.me/28aZ4TEv>



**@PCMagazine**

Want to create your own cities? Yes, there is a map editor in Cities in Motion 2!



**@maximiliano**

Looking for a game that's not dropping \$60 on a curb? Well, here's one. It's called Cities in Motion 2 and it's kicking off Civitas!



**@TheGamer**

Cities in Motion was a pretty good game. I loved it. I loved how to play it, just took lots of patience.



**@Pillbox**

All this chatter about SimCity just reminds me of how much I'm looking forward to Cities in Motion 2.

TWEET US @GAMERZINES

## The fun kind of commute

The fact is that *Cities in Motion* is not a city sim, it's a transport sim set in and around cities. That's a very important distinction to make, especially as *SimCity*'s somewhat traumatic launch has caused Colossal Order's game to be heralded of some kind of simulation messiah.

Bravely battling against the modern day demons of online-all-the-time infrastructure and concessions to the mass market. Comparisons between Maxis' recent faux-pas and *Cities in Motion 2* are inevitable, but in tone, and ambition, these two simulation games are very different.

The first game in this series focused on building up transport networks in real cities throughout the past century, with the likes of London, Helsinki, New York, Tokyo and others all covered in the standard game and DLC. *Cities in Motion 2* moves away from that premise by offering five different cities out of the box and a time frame which is exclusively centred on the modern day.

From a gameplay perspective this change is really smart, as it means that the game clock has slowed down sufficiently enough that the engine now has day/night cycles and that players can easily manage their transport company on a day-to-day basis, by planning out bus routes and building new



*"Cities in Motion 2 Bravely  
battling against the modern  
day demons of online-all-  
the-time infrastructure and  
concessions to the  
mass market"*





roads without being wary of a new transport technology emerging in just a few in-game years.

This change in approach is only possible with the game's significantly enhanced engine, which means that cities now dynamically grow in accordance with the coverage of your transport network. The more efficient your service is, the more people, businesses and services will go to that respective city, offering players a visual representation of their success. City regions have also been enlarged to 8km x 8km, which is four times bigger than the original.

Due to the modern-day setting the modes of transport aren't too extravagant, though. There aren't any vacuum tubes à la *Futurama* or anything like that, instead *Cities in Motion 2*'s transport options stay well within the realms of reality with five different forms to choose from – trams, busses, trolleybusses, metro-trains and ferries. Obviously





there's absolutely nothing wrong with that, but when compared with other more creative simulation titles, *Cities in Motion 2* can feel a bit too true-to-life for its own good.

Colossal Order's seven-strong dev team has also done all they can to adopt feedback from the first game into this one, so expect more

---

*"There aren't any vacuum tubes a la Futurama or anything like that"*

---

graphs and data layers than the original game, as well as the ability to place down depots wherever you wish, so you can judge the optimum stop route for your buses.

We suspect establishing underground train routes and placing down airports remains an important part of *Cities in Motion 2*'s end-game, but it would be nice if

there was a more surprising solution to modern day traffic congestion. Blimps anyone?

The Career mode will still be scenario-based, with the sequel boasting 12 different challenges straight out of the box, but there will be a sandbox mode for players to just mess around. The developers have even chucked in multiple city creation tools so players can terraform land masses and base layouts on real-world cities to share online. Other new inclusions centre around multiplayer, with competitive and co-op modes teased but not yet detailed.

*Cities in Motion 2* is undoubtedly a different kind of simulation to *SimCity*. Nevertheless we suspect a lot of fans burnt by Maxis' recent misstep will enjoy this series' ambitious new direction. All aboard! ■



**PreOrderIQ**

*Click here for up-to-date prices and offers now!*

PREVIEW



# LEVIATHAN: WARSHIPS

PUB: PARADOX  
ETA: MARCH 26TH  
PLATFORMS: PC,  
ANDROID, IOS

**W**hen it comes to grand strategy games, no publisher has done more for the genre than Paradox Interactive. It seems rather odd then that the outfit behind *Crusader Kings*, *Europa Universalis* and *Hearts of Iron* haven't tried to conquer the asynchronous multiplayer side of strategy, with games like *Hero Academy* offering players a chance to challenge players across PC, Macs and tablets, with matches able to continue across multiple platforms.

*Leviathan* is the Swedish publisher's first foray into the blossoming PvP-focused cross platform arena, and from the looks of things it'll be fairly unique. The accessible yet detailed battle system revolves around turn-based naval warfare, with players able

to upgrade their vessels with near-future weaponry like shields and lasers, along with more traditional long range missiles and cannon weaponry.

---

*"Turns are restricted to 10-second chunks, so it's fair to say that battles feel frenetic at times"*

---

From first impressions at least, it's hard not to get a *Battleships* vibe from *Leviathan*, but vessels can also move a certain number of spaces in addition to firing volleys of projectiles at enemies. Turns are restricted to 10-second chunks, so it's fair to say that



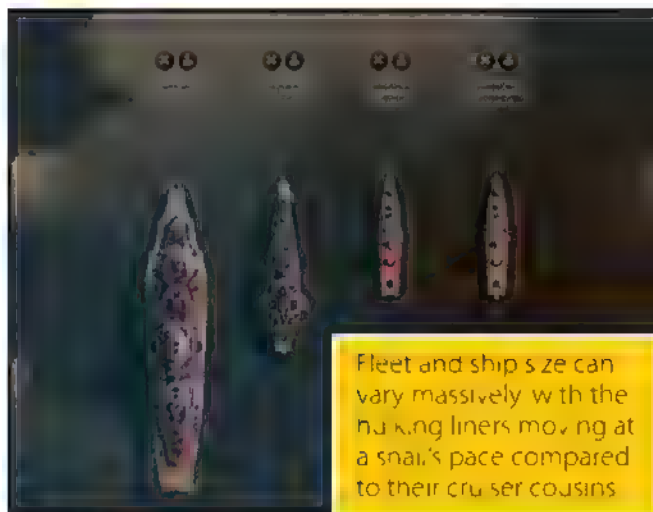


Fiddling with the shape of the ship and weapon make-up forms the basis of pre-battle prep



battles feel frenetic at times, with players having to accurately appraise the way proceedings are going before actually getting a chance to fiddle with shield direction or mull over which weapon to utilise in battle.

This fast pace is somewhat at odds with the slow nature of naval combat itself, but then that just makes matches that much more tense, especially as the fog of war slowly recedes as you explore uncharted waters. On the customisation side players can also fiddle with the make-up of their ships on a component by component level and switch out vessels to come up with the

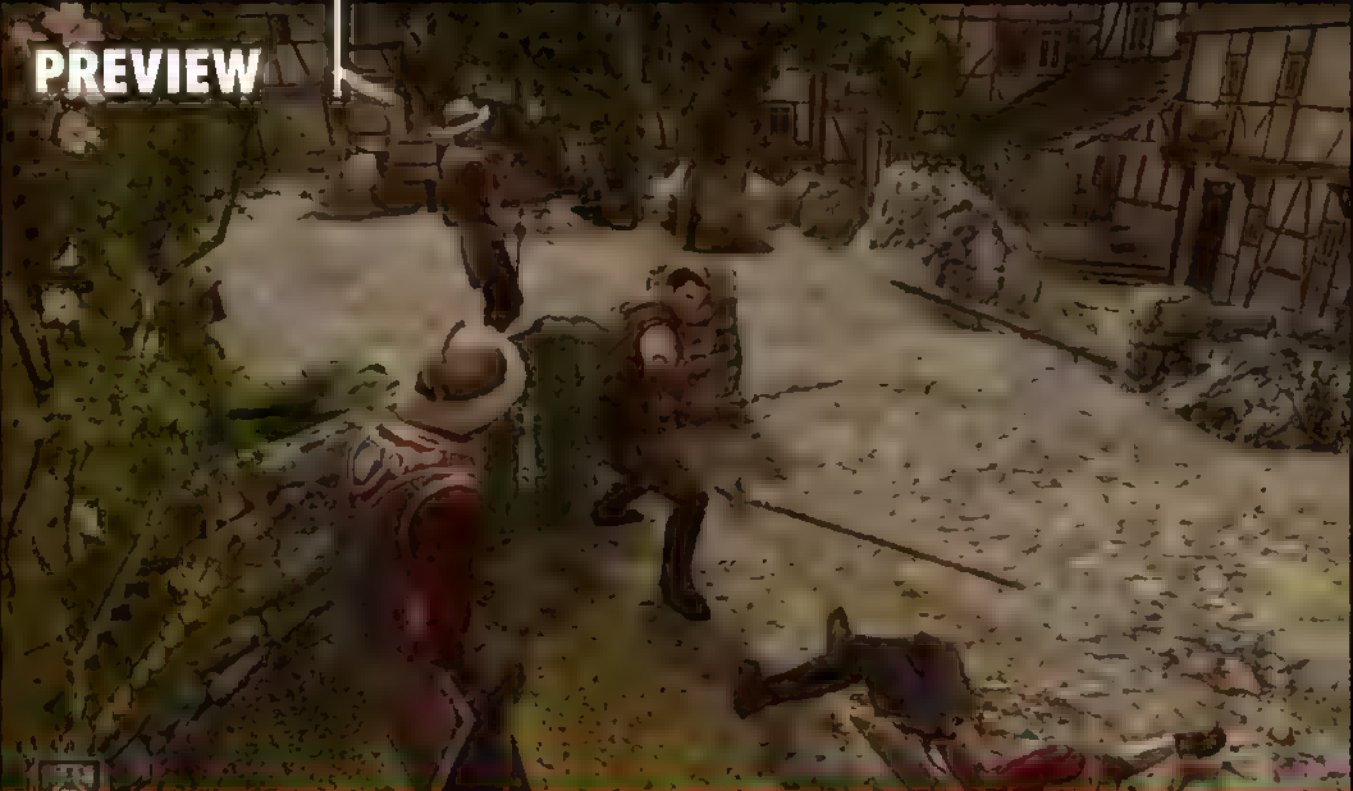


Fleet and ship size can vary massively with the hulking liners moving at a snail's pace compared to their cruiser cousins

ideal fleet set up. The only white elephant in the room is the lack of any kind of submarines in *Leviathan*, but then we'd wager those stealthy constructs would nullify the appeal of these 100-ton floating battleships going at it. We expect this exciting PvP experience will be around for a long time to come. ■

**PreOrderIQ**

Click here for up-to-date prices and offers now!



# THE DARK EYE: DEMONICON

PUB: KALYPSO  
ETA: LATE 2013  
PLATFORMS: PC,  
XBOX 360

NEW GAMES OF NOUMENA STUDIOS

**A**fter its big unveiling in issue 65 of *PCGZine* last year, not much has been seen of the darker than dark RPG, *Demonicon*. Behind the scenes, developer Noumena Studios has been making changes, with protagonist Cairon swapping his short cropped hair for a higher grade and, surprisingly, Creative Director Eric Jannot is no longer working on the project. We have no idea of the story behind this change of personnel, but despite being several months on from the last time we saw *Demonicon* in action, its Alpha form seemed fairly encouraging.

The initial tutorial quest of a cannibal stealing villagers to dial up his magical power was still there, as was Cairon's uncomfortable infatuation with his fiery

redheaded sister, sending the character down a dark, dangerous path. A lot of *Demonicon's* appeal is distilled into its dark fantasy setting, with the character's downfall

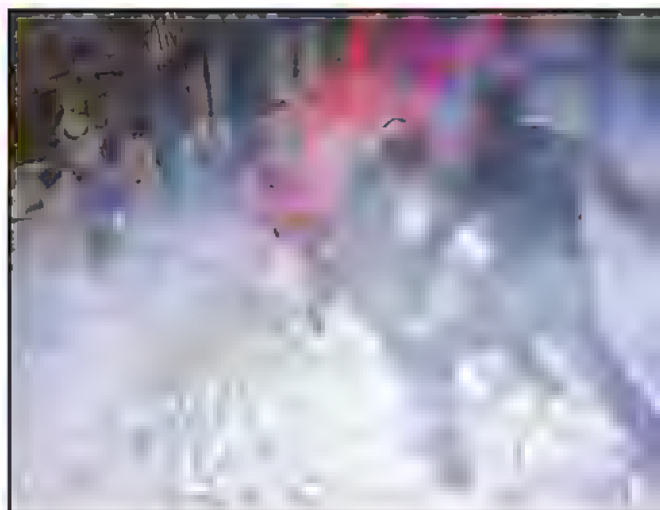
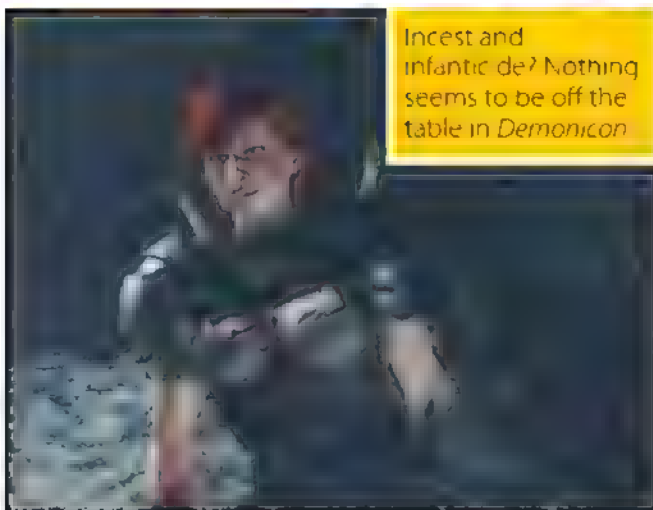
---

*"Sacrificing multiple human babies conjures a fleshy demon giant into the world"*

---

running parallel with a town which has yet to fall to evil pillaging forces in a grand, continent-wide war. If you aren't familiar with *The Dark Eye* universe it seems to share a lot in common with Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, only darker and more German...





The third-person combat still relies on the predictable tropes of strafing and rolling while slashing or chucking ranged magic attacks at groups of enemies, but the gameplay looked sharper than what we'd seen before, with combos feeling tighter and enemy behaviour more varied thanks to signature moves. What was new was the genuinely unsettling introduction of a new Priestess antagonist known as Azorial who is revealed to players by, we kid you not, sacrificing multiple human babies to conjure a fleshy demon giant into the world. Couple this adult-only content with deep moral decisions which vary from

dark to not-quite-so-dark and it's clear that Noumena aren't afraid of courting a little controversy with their debut game.

Overall, development on *Demonicon* seems to be continuing well and Noumena certainly don't seem to be compromising on their unflinchingly gnarly setting. We'll learn more about that soon no doubt. ■

**PreOrderIQ**  
Click here for up-to-date  
prices and offers now!

# Why ShootMania could take the FPS world by storm

**L**ike many thousands of gamers nowadays, we find ourselves increasingly being turned off by the direction many modern-day shooters are going with regards to competitive multiplayer. In days gone by we used to cherish our time killing counter-terrorists on *CS: 1.6*, insta-gibbing fellow players in *Quake 3: Arena* and clashing sabres with fellow Jedi in *Star Wars: Dark Forces II*'s Oasis map. In these perfectly balanced online arenas, there wasn't any need for silly modern obsessions like character progression, weapon unlocks, or killstreak bonuses to

incentivise long-term play. Instead it was the relative simplicity and replayability associated with shooting the other guy before he or she got you which became the only (yet very powerful) draw. There wasn't any need to 'rank-up' to get more gear or involved with players abusing one another for using cheap weapons like the grenade launcher, instead when victory did occur it felt pure and absolute. It was only skill that determined the victor and there was a power implicit to that eternal truth. This competitive simplicity has evaporated from the vast majority of online





ld  
by

Simi

# STORM

shooters today and frankly we're at a loss to explain why.

*"Victory has been democritised in such a way that it isn't players who have the most skill which win matches"*

What's the purpose of all this choice when it

comes to weapons, attachments, classes and perks if all they do is muddy the competitive waters? Victory has been democritised in such a way that it isn't players who have the most skill which win the most matches on regular servers, instead it's often those who simply have the most amount of time to play or at worst, have purchased the appropriate weapon-granting DLC to give an unfair advantage when compared with their vanilla-arsenaled cousins.

Halo, Call of Duty, Gears of War and even the cherished PC-darling Team Fortress 2 has



## CLASH OF TITANS

Players are never under any illusions regarding their skill level in ShootMania Storm. Boasting a similar leaderboard structure to TrackMania 2, players earn ranking and Planets for competing in matches. Ladder ranking updates on a match-to-match basis, with players able to search for the best players in a particular game type, as well as their particular region or country.

Servers are also subjected to a similar structure, so it's possible to not only search for them via game type, but also country and sub-location. Take England, for instance. That zone boasts nine different sub-locations with London, Yorkshire and the Midlands all boasting their own servers. Players can rent their own servers from Nadeo with the Planets currency which is earned simply by playing.

One shot can make all the difference in *ShootMania Storm*, and it often does.



wandered face-first into this weapon-filled marshland as if to say to their community, "Don't treat us as a real competitive environment, this is just an online playground built to show off your special items."

Sod that for a bag of gibs, we want our real online shooters back! A time where balance and simplicity were deemed more important than achievements, needless HUD-based stats and worshipping the almighty DLC dollar.

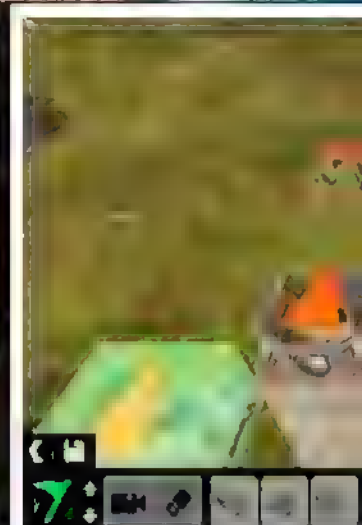
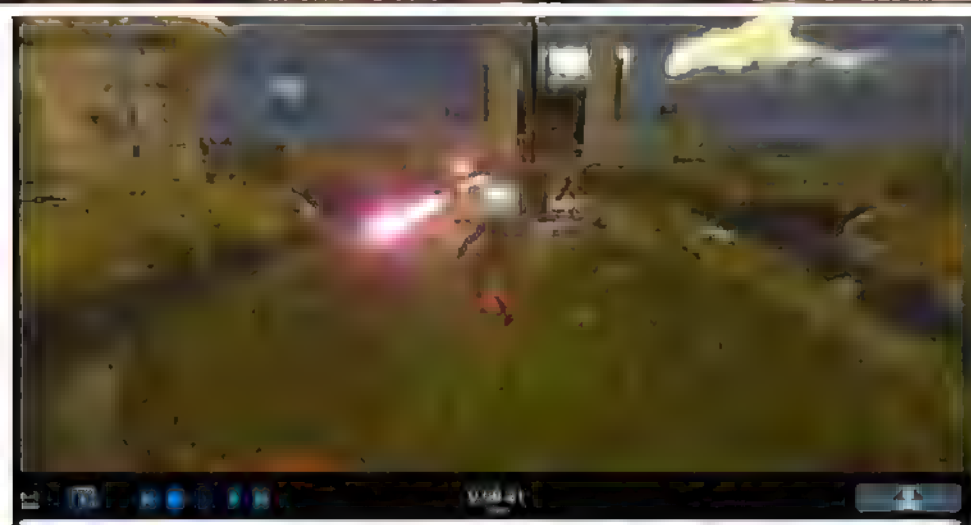
This genre needs change or more appropriately a throwback to the golden age of mouse and keyboard shooters, and to us that's exactly what *ShootMania Storm* offers.

Like Nadeo's niche racing series *TrackMania*, gameplay is deceptively simple in *ShootMania*.

Armed with a morphing plasma weapon, all players need to do is literally point and shoot at their competitors to score a point. All combatants can take three hits before their mortal form evaporates leaving a rather cool vapour trail, and

*"This is a throwback to the golden age of mouse and keyboard shooters"*

weapons don't boast secondary fire modes or ammo. Instead your weapon recharges after a couple of seconds down-time to offer three shots. When playing *ShootMania* it's impossible not to







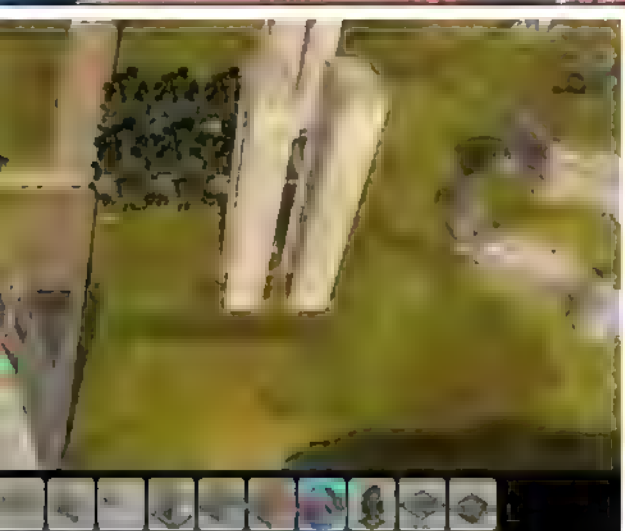
be reminded of *Quake 3: Arena*'s one-shot kill railgun matches, as the action feels fast, fluid and frenetic. Keeping your reticle on the target ahead is just as important as keeping your character's movement unpredictable with jumps, strafing and use of the agility enhancer, so you don't get picked off before you pick off somebody else.

Things get little more complicated when talking about *ShootMania*'s map-orientated weapon design and diverse number of developer and community-made game-modes. Depending on the map and game-mode when you move into sheltered areas, your railgun will morph into a translucent globe-spewing mine launcher, whereas when you move onto certain tiles on a map your weapon transforms into a one-hit kill lightning gun. It sounds

complicated but this system is very reminiscent of weapon pick-ups, only there isn't a need to physically pick up an item, instead it just activates when you wander into the necessary part of a map.

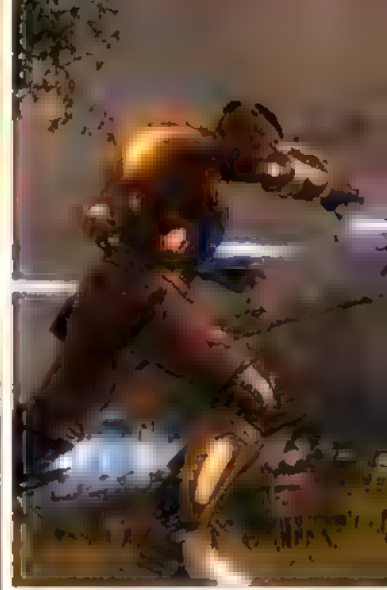
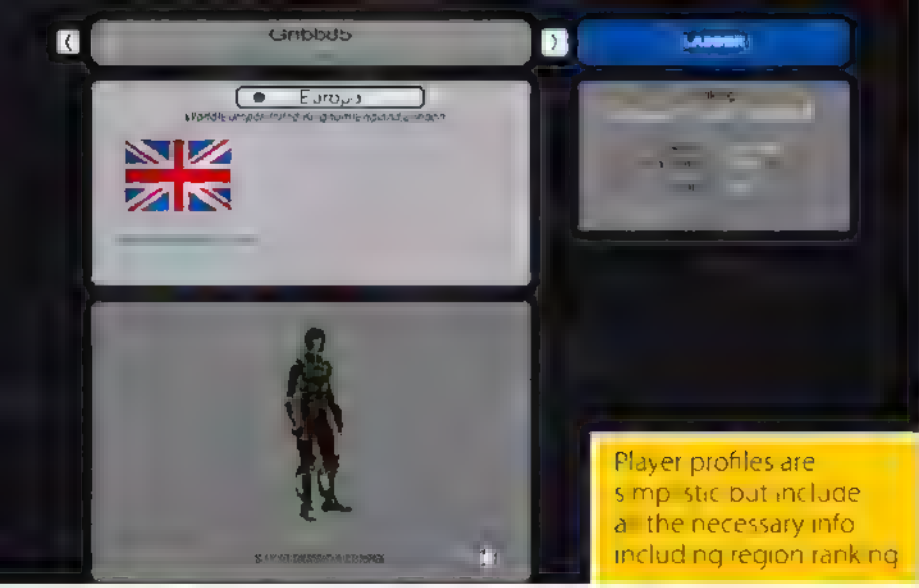
On the game-mode front, choices range from the 'Arena' deathmatch mode, where players compete to capture a single point on a map which limit spawns and brings in an ever-decreasing perimeter of death onto the battlefield with anyone caught in the windy wall instantly fried, to the team-centric Royal match type which sees one player facing a team of others while armed with a one-hit kill lightning gun, trying to capture a single node.

*ShootMania*'s simplified online landscape is changing constantly thanks to the litany of new



## EDIT EVERYTHING

As well as boasting a fully fledged map editor with texture import and scripting options, *ShootMania Storm* also has a flexible video editing suite to allow players to record matches and create videos if they wish. Hollywood types can mess around with camera angles, choose their own soundtrack and even export footage so it can be rendered at the highest possible quality outside of the game. All matches can be recorded with minimal stress to memory, allowing gamers to enjoy matches and evaluate their performance on a millisecond-to-millisecond basis.



modes and maps being added to the game every day, and even in its current open-Beta state, *Storm* seems to be flourishing. Sure you can just stay on Nadeo's official servers if you want to stick to what you know, but heading onto random ones can lead to surprising map, gameplay and music choices – variety is the spice of life. There's certainly something to be said for joining a server having no clue of the challenge that awaits you, and adapting to this new surroundings while maintaining a good points tally is certainly a challenge worth savouring if you can manage it.

Like with *TrackMania* 1 and 2, Nadeo has made community empowerment a key trait of

*ShootMania's* DNA. Players can import textures, create new maps and modes, record and manipulate footage of matches and even stream

*"ShootMania is an antidote to the modern fascination with over complication and monetisation"*

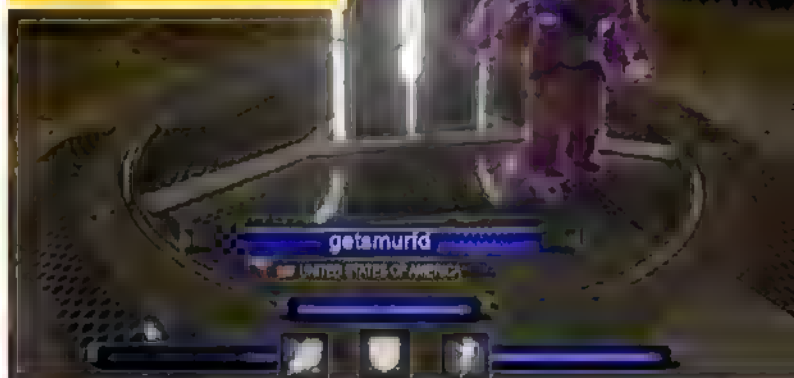
games live to Twitch.tv. To say this is a refreshing change to the strictly controlled ideals of modern shooter development would be an







Thanks to their structure Arena matches usually devolve into tense strafing matches as the tornado closes in around the capture node



understatement. Simply put, *ShootMania* is an antidote to the modern fascination with over complication and monetisation of online shooter development. ID never bothered you to buy DLC for *Doom* or *Quake* and neither do Nadeo. Their shooter will be transformed by bulky environmental expansions in the future, if *TrackMania 2*'s track record is anything to go by, but the French studio seem committed to allowing gamers to do almost whatever they want with their work. Nadeo deserve credit for their faith in the increasingly demonised PC community and they've even opened up *ShootMania*'s Beta to free for fans to experiment with before its launch in April.

Make no mistake, *ShootMania Storm* isn't perfect. There are the needlessly confusing ManiaPlanet community hub, and unstable patches breaking server scripts controlling map lists and customisation plug-ins, but overall its design is still a breath of fresh air.

If *ShootMania* becomes the multiplayer phenomenon that it has the potential to be then we could see a new breed of retro shooters call back to the multiplayer genre's earliest beginnings and in our opinion that would be a good thing. It's time for disenfranchised deathmatch fans to retake the genre which made online gaming so popular. Viva la Résistance! ■



# Upcoming DLC & UGC

## Mass Effect 3: Citadel



PUB: [ ]  
DEV: [ ]  
OUT NOW

**C**itadel is the last piece of DLC to be released for the *Mass Effect* trilogy, and that makes us quite sad. Yes we know this series hasn't been without controversy (most of it centred around the third game and that deflating 'Starchild' ending) but *Citadel* sets a lot of those issues right.

BioWare's history with DLC is mixed, with terrible efforts like *Pinnacle Station* undoing the good work of excellent content like *Lair of the Shadowbroker*. Forget all that though, as *Citadel* is the best add-on content BioWare has created so far.

This DLC offers more time with the beloved characters that have stuck with you through the series and the writing hits the right notes between silly and self-aware. *Mass Effect 3* was too melancholy for our tastes, this DLC busts it down to size. ■



## Half-Life 2: Wars



DEV: [ ]  
FIND IT: [ ]  
OUT NOW

**T**his total conversion mod uses assets from *Half-Life 2: Episode 2* and *Alien Swarm 2* to create a surprisingly decent RTS set around the war between the rebels

and the Combine. With Valve doing all they can to ignore the possibility of putting out *Half-Life 3*, as far as we're aware, this may be the closest any gamer ever gets to seeing more battles play out post-*Episode 2*.

Sad certainly, but that doesn't mean this mod isn't worth tinkering around with. *HL2: Wars* was originally launched in 2008, but since then the team has been tinkering away, and has recently released their most stable and entertaining build, yet boasting a load of new models. Keep plugging away at it guys, who knows you might even spur Valve into action! ■





# NFS: Most Wanted



PUB: EA  
DEV: Criterion Games  
OUT NOW

**C**riterion has a brilliant record when it comes to DLC, thanks mostly to *Burnout Paradise*. They'll be the first to admit their year-long support of the previous entry in *Burnout* was an experiment, adding new cars, bikes and a mini-island to the game post-launch, and for *Most Wanted* they're adopting a similar approach.

The three DLC packs, titled *Terminal Velocity*, *Movie Legends* and *Heroes* have been thrust unceremoniously out of the door with the option to buy all this content together or piecemeal. *Terminal Velocity* is undoubtedly the most important of the bunch, adding a new airport region to *Most Wanted*'s already

substantial map, whereas the other two focus on cars. The *Heroes* pack contains previous star cars in the *Need for Speed* series, whereas *Movie Legends* focuses on the four-wheeled stars of the screen. That last set is worth it for the utterly stunning Aston Martin DB5 alone. ■



# Just Cause 2: Multiplayer



DEV: JC2MPDEV  
FIND IT: JC-MP  
COM  
ETA: TBD

**A**valanche Studios have already begun teasing *Just Cause 3* (c'mon guys, your mystery screenshots don't fool anybody) but that doesn't mean there isn't



still a load of fun to be had with *Just Cause 2*. Take this delightful multiplayer mod for the zany open-world game. Currently still in Beta, players can only sample it by logging into the mod's official site, signing up with their Steam ID and waiting for the devs to switch on access to Beta servers, which boasts the ability to host 1,200 Ricos all zip-lining around Panau at the same time.

The devs behind *Just Cause 2* have certainly clocked the popularity of this mod, and if they're clever they'll add some kind of similar functionality MMO into *Just Cause 3*. Follow @JC2MPDEV for news of more Beta weekends. The last one was in February, so we're due another soon. ■

# Dishonored: Knife of Dunwall



PUB: E  
DEV: G  
ETA: Apr 11

**T**he first bit of DLC for *Dishonored* wasn't exactly what we were looking for. Sure, *City Trails* was a nice way to offer up some new scenarios to mess around in, but we're much more excited about the newly revealed '*Knife of Dunwall*' expansion. Functioning as the first part of a new mini-campaign, this new content puts players in the boots of Daud, the assassin who killed the Empress in *Dishonored*'s original campaign. Essentially, players will be assuming the role of Corvo Attano's antagonist, in a concurrent storyline.

Expect to see big events in this universe from a new perspective and utilise a set of new weapons and powers, including the ability to call in fellow assassins at will. Best of all, this new story slice will only cost £7.99/800 MS Points. ■



# Tomb Raider: Caves & Cliffs



PUB. Square  
DEV: E  
OUT NOW

**M**ore multiplayer maps isn't exactly what we want from Crystal Dynamics when it comes to *Tomb Raider* DLC. The best part of the gritty reboot

starring Lara Croft wasn't the team-based multiplayer, it was the campaign with its visceral action, genuinely unsettling violence and surprisingly engaging story.

We're hoping there's more of that thrilling single-player content to come as *Caves & Cliffs*' three different maps (Scavenger Caverns, Cliff Shantytown and Burning Village) don't really excite us. Instead they just make us wish that Crystal Dynamics could plough their efforts into more designs that don't involve shooting fellow players in the face. Worst of all, Microsoft has an exclusivity deal in place regarding this DLC, so only Xbox 360 players can enjoy this content at the time of writing. ■





# Fallout: Who Vegas



DEV: ...  
FIND IT: ...  
ETA: ...

**W**ould you look at that name? We don't even like *Doctor Who* here at *FirstLook*, but that name of this strange cross-universe mod has us intrigued. This community-made content adds a new



quest to *Fallout: New Vegas*, tasking the player with finding the legendary Tardis.

The project has been in development for three years and the overall quality of the team and their talent really shows. In addition to a new questline, players can fly around the world with the Tardis, customise the legendary ship and utilise fan-favourite weapons like the Alpha Meson Blaster and Sonic Screwdriver. Daleks, Cybermen, Silurians, Autons, Weeping Angels and the Silence also feature as well. Here's hoping the BBC's licensing lawyers hold off from 'intervening' in this project, at least until we get some kind of Beta release. ■

# Forgotten Hope 2



DEV: Forgotten Hope 2  
FIND IT: ...  
OUT NOW

**A**ll mods are labours of love in one way or another. There's no way that talented artists, coders and testers can funnel all their free time into a project without truly believing in what they're doing. The greatest test of this belief is once the first public release is out the door, as the dev team then has a choice to continue to tweak their work or let somebody else pick up the slack.

*Forgotten Hope 2*, a World War II mod for *Battlefield 2*, was released way back in 2007 yet the team behind it is still working hard to add new historically accurate weaponry, vehicles and factions to the game, even though *Battlefield 4* is looming large on the horizon. That my friends is absolutely a labour

of love and one that fans pay back with interest. *Forgotten Hope 2* is currently one of the highest-rated mods on ModDB and boasts a rating of 9.4/10. Great stuff! ■



COMPETITION

# DOLLAR DASH

Win all this:



Custom Xbox360 250GB



Custom controller



Copy of Dollar Dash

## Win a Dollar Dash Bundle of Goodies!

This is actually the first competition to appear in *FirstLook* magazine so we thought we'd offer something rather special. Kalypso Media and Candygun Games have donated a shiny new custom-designed 250GB Xbox 360 with a similarly designed Xbox 360 controller and a copy of *Dollar Dash* for one of you lucky lot to win! This prize is to celebrate the recent release of *Dollar Dash* on Xbox Live Arcade, PlayStation Network and Steam.

The acclaimed party game is a modern reinvention of the top-down classic *Bomberman*, with four players cast as robbers trying to knock their competitors out of contention with an array of comedic weaponry, while collecting gold sprinkled around the map. To win this exciting prize for yourself, plick click [HERE](#).

For full competition terms and conditions, please visit [www.gamerzines.com](http://www.gamerzines.com)

**FirstLook** | Win!





kalyps



Best Downloadable Game



ISSUE 04

# NEXT MONTH



THE WORLD'S FAVOURITE  
SHOOTER RETURNS



FINAL FANTASY XIV:  
A REALM REBORN

**FirstLook** | NextMonth



**ISSUE 4:  
APRIL  
18TH**



## GRID 2

All rights reserved. This publication may be copied in its entirety without modification for non-commercial purposes, for example but not limited to copying to CD-R for a friend, but it may not be offered for download from any website or similar without the prior permission of the copyright holder. You are free to, and encouraged to, link to the original file for download from our website where you can find help on doing so. While the greatest care is taken in producing this publication, we do not accept responsibility for the loss of any data or any other damage caused by following the instructions in this publication. We always recommend that you keep a backup of your hard disk data and ensure that you check all files for viruses before installing or using any new software. None of the information in this publication is intended as legal advice. All articles are for information purposes only. Websites mentioned in this publication are not affiliated to or controlled by the publisher. We are not responsible for the contents of these sites or any changes made to them.

All contents © Cranberry Publishing Ltd 2013  
Company registration number: 4987058